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THE ROCK
AND THE RIVER

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BLACK ROCK
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THE RUNNER
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THE ROCK AND THE RIVER

A Romance of Quebec

by
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LONDON
JOHN LANE THE BODLEY HEAD LTD.

First published in 1932
Reprinted 1932
Abridged Edition 1934

THE ROCK AND THE RIVER

CHAPTER I

ON a sparkling winter morning in Quebec, a party of young people stood talking by the frozen Fleuve—the one and only river for the inhabitants of French Canada, the mighty St. Lawrence.

“Ah, good morning, Miss Christine. Glorious morning. What a day for roses!”

“We are admiring this wonderful racer!”

“Racer! Gad, yes! Thoroughbred, eh—thoroughbred all round. Please present me!”

“But certainly. Madeleine, may I present my friend
_____”

“And slave,” murmured Fitz-Gibbon.

“Mr. Fitz-Gibbon, of the 49th, one of General Brock’s pet lambs and I warn you a prodigious flirt. Mr. Fitz-Gibbon, my dearest friend, Miss Madeleine Van Rancken of Albany, New York.”

With his hand on his heart, the young soldier made a profound bow to the young lady.

“Do not heed her, I beg you, Miss Van Rancken. She is a most cruel slave-driver!”

The young lady, still a mere child, tall, fair, with adorable blue eyes, that coolly scrutinized the young Irishman, acknowledged his bow with a stately inclination of her head.

“And this is Mademoiselle Louise Vallières, a very trying young friend of mine, of whom I bid you beware,”

continued Miss Christine, indicating a young lady whose snapping black eyes and vivacious smile seemed to quite justify the warning.

"Alas, what chance has a man in the midst of such perils?" exclaimed Fitz-Gibbon. "And——" He paused, looking at the young man by the sleigh, whose prancing thoroughbred was demanding his full attention.

"Oh!" said Miss Christine lightly. "This young man, Rory Fraser, Red Rory, Roree Rouge, is one of our Malbaie people, a notable hunter, trapper and, as you see, the owner of the finest race-horse in the country, and la petite Josette McNab, the belle of Malbaie."

Red Rory, whose flaming shock of hair fully justified his cognomen, bowed slightly to the young soldier, and removing his bearskin cap made a sweeping bow to the young ladies.

"What a lovely horse," said Miss Madeleine, stepping lightly towards the beautiful animal.

"Pardon!" said Red Rory, raising his hand. "Vitesse!" he cried sharply. "Saluez!" Instantly the mare stood on her hind legs and stood pawing the air.

"Oh, the darling!" cried Madeleine. "May I touch her?"

"But surely. She is gentle as a kitten. See! Vitesse! Baisez-moi," said Red Rory, turning his face towards the mare. With lips quivering, she nibbled at his ear.

"Oh, how sweet," said Madeleine, coming near.

"Vitesse!" cried Rory. "Baisez la Mademoiselle! Doucement! Doucement!"

Very lightly the velvet lips touched the ear of the young lady.

"What a waste!" sighed Fitz-Gibbon.

"Oh, you darling!" cried Madeleine, putting her arms about the proudly arching neck.

"Oh!" groaned Fitz-Gibbon.

But the girl ignored him.

"And she is a racer?" she said to Red Rory.

"There is none like her," said Red Rory quietly.

"And gentle?"

"Josette can drive her anywhere."

Madeleine turned to the girl in the sleigh.

"How wonderful! But not racing."

"Oh, no! She pulls the sleigh on her bit. But anywhere else——"

"Ah, what joy! Perhaps——" She hesitated.

"But yes! Any day if you would come," said Josette, an eager smile lighting her dark eyes.

The whole company grouped about the mare, admiring, questioning.

"Jove, she looks like some speed, eh?" said Fitz-Gibbon, after a critical examination of her points.

"Have you her in the Saturday races?"

"No," said Red Rory. "She has no training."

"Holy Mary! What a killing one could make! Eh, Miss Christine? You are a sport, now."

"If I were, Vitesse would carry my money," said Miss Christine.

"And mine," said Miss Van Rancken.

"And mine," echoed Miss Vallières.

"Bedad, we must fix it up, young man," exclaimed Fitz-Gibbon. "By the way, the General would like you to see him this afternoon at, say, two o'clock." Fitz-Gibbon's manner was as if he were giving an order.

Red Rory looked him over calmly and replied:

"Would he? I am at the Royal Hotel."

"What the devil?"

"Good morning," said Red Rory. "Good morning, Miss Christine." He swept a bow to the other young ladies, and stepped into his carriage. A word to Vitesse and he was away like the wind, leaving Fitz-Gibbon staring and speechless.

"Well?" said Miss Christine with a gay laugh. "You have learned something, Mr. Fitz-Gibbon."

"Now by all the saints!" ejaculated the young man.

"And who may he be, if ye please?"

"Now you'll know how to treat a Fraser of Malbaie."

"What! A son of the Seigneur?"

"Oh, no! A cousin of sorts, but still a Fraser of Malbaie. Roderick John Fraser, a Lovat Fraser, no less. They are all cousins of the chief, you must know."

"But—but—the General. What shall I say to him?" sputtered Fitz-Gibbon. "The young devil! The insulting young devil."

"Insulting?" said Miss Van Rancken, raising her eyebrows at him. "He gave you his address. The Hotel Royale, I believe, was it not, Christine?"

"Yes. The General might call on him there. Or perhaps a polite note might do?" Christine was enjoying herself mightily. Never had she seen the young officer at a loss before.

"Better run along, my dear Mr. Fitz-Gibbon, and call upon the young man. You will find him quite polite, if you remember he is a Lovat Fraser from Malbaie."

"Lovat Fraser! I'd like to send a file of soldiers after him. So I would."

"No, no! Not unless you send a full platoon. And let them be Highlanders. Yon lad killed the bear whose skin he is wearing, with his hunting knife," replied Christine. "I assure you, Red Rory is not to be trifled with."

"It is surely a simple thing, Mr. Fitz-Gibbon, if I may suggest, that one gentleman should call on another gentleman," said Miss Van Rancken, with a suspicious gleam in her blue eyes.

"Would you like me to go with you, Mr. Fitz-Gibbon?" asked Miss Christine demurely.

"And now ye're having your fun with me. But the General. I simply cannot go back to him without the promise of that young devil of a barbarian to come to him."

"Let us all go," suggested Miss Van Rancken wickedly.

"Why not, indeed?" said Miss Christine. "Besides, who knows he might——"

"Quite true," said the girl gaily. "I am dying for a ride behind the admirable Vitesse."

"Well, go I must at any rate. But you young ladies—not a foot of ye! I want no witnesses to my humiliation," replied Fitz-Gibbon wrathfully.

"Humiliation? Not a bit. Red Rory can be a very fine gentleman, as his father could before him and as his gran'père, Sandy Fraser, can be to this day. There will be no humiliation, Mr. Fitz-Gibbon."

Still Mr. Fitz-Gibbon declined their company. But the more he declined the more the three young ladies protested their determination to see again the adorable Vitesse.

"Come away, Mr. Fitz-Gibbon. Why make so much of a very simple thing?" cried Miss Christine impatiently. "Besides, there is the petite Josette, a dear little thing whom I must arrange to see. I shall go to call upon her. You are all accompanying."

To this Mr. Fitz-Gibbon finally and with much doubting assented, and in a few minutes they found themselves in the somewhat stuffy parlour of the Royal Hotel. In her grandest manner, Miss Christine gave her command.

Miss Christine Nairne of Malbaie and her friends desired to see Mr. Fraser and Miss Josette McNab. The polite *maître d'hôtel* returned with the information that M'sieur Fraser and Mam'selle McNab had gone to the river and had not returned. Mr. Fitz-Gibbon glanced at his watch.

"There is time for a turn on the course. Let us go down. They have quite good horses here."

Mademoiselle Vallières was doubtful as to the propriety of going down to the ice. There might be a crowd there.

"And am I not sufficient chaperon for you, child?" cried Miss Christine; "what a little nun you are." Miss Christine's brusque enthusiasm overcame all scruples, and soon behind a spanking pair of French Canadians in a double sleigh the party drove down through the Lower

Town, threading their way through the crowded narrow streets and out upon the ice course on the Fleuve, as the habitants with fine discrimination name their mighty St. Lawrence.

"What a crowd!" exclaimed Louise. "Oh, do you think, Christine, we ought to go among all those people?"

"Nonsense, little one! What do you fear? Am I not here? Not to speak of the gallant Lieutenant Fitz-Gibbon."

"Aha! There is some speeding here! Oh, for a racer," exclaimed Fitz-Gibbon.

"Oh, see, Christine! There is Vitesse!" cried Madeleine, who was in the front seat beside the driver.

"So it is! Now we shall see something!"

Upon the ice along the water front, a double race track about a mile long had been laid out, along which a number of horses hitched to all sorts of sliding conveyances were careering up and down. The course down stream was taken at a moderate pace, but on the return up stream, the horses came at racing speed.

Into the course Fitz-Gibbon turned his team, and they found themselves trotting along gaily at a smart pace, keeping their place in the procession, but when they had reached the turn and had entered the return course every horse, single or double, was on his mettle, straining at the bit, mad to be away. Soon Fitz-Gibbon found that, however eager his team of sturdy little French Canadians, he had to yield place to racing steeds that went roaring past.

"Aha, there's a bird," said Fitz-Gibbon, as a tall rangy black, in a new-fangled American light cutter, went flashing past.

"You know him, Christine?" said Madeleine as the driver waved to them in passing.

"Yes. That is young Freddy Fielding," said Christine, "with his imported English racer. A wonderful horse, trained in America."

As she spoke a sleigh came roaring over the ice behind them, turned out and flashed by.

"Vitesse ! Oh, it is Vitesse !" exclaimed Madeleine in great excitement.

"Follow up !" cried Christine. "Oh, make the team fly, Mr. Fitz-Gibbon."

With whip cracking, he sent his team galloping up the course, heedless of the rule that trotting was the only gait permitted when racing. Galloping, they followed hard upon the heels of Vitesse.

"Look at her ! Oh, wonderful !" Madeleine was half standing, leaning over the dashboard. Wonderful it was, and mainly because of the smooth, easy grace of the mare's pace. Past all the horses on the course, the great black racer sped, his shod feet drumming with the sharp staccato on the splintering ice. Close behind him, her toes daintily spurning the ice, in smooth effortless motion, flew Vitesse.

A few moments and Madeleine Van Rancken settled back in her seat.

"She has him easily," she murmured.

The race ended with the great black in front pounding the ice in a terrific display of speed, and with Vitesse dragging the carriage on her bit smoothly skimming the ice, her beautiful head lapping the flank of the black before her.

With difficulty, Fitz-Gibbon brought his galloping team to a walk and turned off the course to await the return of the two racers.

When Freddy Fielding had brought his horse to a standstill beside the French Canadians, he leaped from his cutter and came forward with outstretched hand to Miss Christine.

"I saw you !" he cried.

"A glorious race !" she replied. "And a hard one too, Freddy."

"Oh, I was not pressed too hardly."

Meantime, while the young man was being presented

to the company, an exultant crowd of townsfolk had crowded about Vitesse and her driver, proclaiming in boisterous exclamations her superior powers.

Standing up in the sleigh, Christine summoned Red Rory to her. Slowly through her crowding admirers, Vitesse daintily picked her way, proudly tossing her beautiful head.

"Come here, Rory," ordered Christine.

Handing the reins to Josette, Red Rory approached the sleigh and was duly presented.

"You don't know, I suppose," said Christine, "that you were racing the fastest horse in Quebec."

"No," said Red Rory, with a slight laugh. "A good horse indeed, but not the fastest, not now."

A chorus of enthusiastic exclamations burst from the French-Canadians in the crowd, to many of whom Red Rory was well known. Momentarily the crowd grew in numbers by the arrival of those who had been driving in the course. Among these a number gathered about Freddy Fielding to congratulate him on his victory.

"Another victory, Freddy, my boy," cried a big red-faced, loud-voiced man, whose accents proclaimed him a recent arrival from England. "My word! The Black Duke is piling 'em up, eh what? After all, blood will tell. By Jove, there is nothing like the Home-bred stock."

"Except the Canada bred, Colonel," said a gentleman. "Look at this bit of horse-flesh." A shout greeted his words.

"Ah, M. Bédard," said the Colonel, with a slight stiffening of manner. "A fine and dainty mare she is, true enough. Yes, sir, I grant you, a very pretty beast indeed," continued the Colonel, critically scanning the mare. "Canada bred, you say?"

"Right down the river, sir, at Malbaie. I know some little thing about racing stock. I have often seen the Black Duke perform, but never this beauty till to-day, but she carries my money, Colonel."

"Ah! You mean?"

"But certainly, to a moderate extent. I am a poor newspaper man, Colonel."

"A race! A race!" shouted the mercurial Canadians, in whose veins the racing, sporting blood ran hot.

"What do you say, Freddy?"

"Not to-day, Colonel. My horse has been four times over the course, but any time after this week. After Saturday."

"But of course!" exclaimed M. Bédard. "It is a noble horse. What do you say, Roree? Oh, permit me. Colonel Gregory, my friend, M. Roree Fraser of Malbaie."

"Malbaie?" exclaimed the Colonel, shaking hands cordially with Red Rory. "Any relation of my friend, Colonel Malcolm Fraser?"

"Not to speak of, Colonel," said Red Rory, with a laugh. "Merely a habitant-Highlander."

"The Fraser Highlander stock, Colonel," said M. Bédard, clapping Red Rory on the shoulder. "The premier fur trapper, hunter of Canada, as his soldier father and grandfather before him."

"And a good sport too," said the Colonel with a wave towards Vitesse.

"Exactly! The finest horse in Quebec."

"Ah! That reminds me, M. Bédard. A little sport, eh? What do you say?"

"But most certainly, Colonel."

"A hundred or so?"

"Very good! Excellent! Now then, Roree, we shall trim these fine English sports," said M. Bédard, gleefully rubbing his hands. "One hundred dollars for a little race? Eh? Mon vieux?"

Red Rory laughed. "Let us ask Vitesse, eh?" he said.

"You make sport of me," said M. Bédard.

"You mistake me. Observe. Mam'selle Vitesse, will you race for a bet?"

Vitesse shook her head violently. The whole crowd burst into delighted laughter.

"By Jove!" exclaimed the Colonel. "And she is a lady, what?"

"Because she is a lady," murmured Miss Van Rancken.

Red Rory caught the words and smiled at her.

"I have it!" exclaimed M. Bédard, smiting his mittened hands together. "We must have the race. The honour of Canada is at stake. 'Le Canadien' will offer a purse. Is it not so, Colonel?"

"Oh, my dear M. Bédard. Let us keep the thing clean."

"Clean? What do you mean, sir? Clean?" In an instant the whole atmosphere was changed. All smiles were gone from the crowd. Angry murmurs rose. The Canadians drew close, jostling, pushing.

"I am no politician, M. Bédard. I dislike the dirty mess. Frankly I loathe your 'Canadien,' nasty treasonable rag."

"Tien!" shouted M. Bédard. "Enough! 'Le Canadien' is no treasonable rag. *Fiat justitia ruat cælum* is its motto! Permit one to say——"

"M. Bédard," interrupted Red Rory with his gay laugh, "let us leave it to Vitesse."

He moved towards the mare's head.

"Ma petite, écoutez-moi!"

The mare threw up her lovely head and pricked forward her ears. Red Rory addressed her in French.

"You like 'Le Canadien'?" The mare answered with a slight nod.

"Ah, not too much!" said Red Rory.

The crowd broke into a roar of laughter in which M. Bédard joined.

"You will race for the purse offered by 'Le Canadien'?" Immediately the mare shook her head violently. "What? You will not?"

The response was a violent shaking of head and body till the harness rattled on her back.

"Vitesse will not race for purse nor politics. But she will race for honour. Pour l'honneur, Vitesse? Pour l'honneur, n'est-ce pas?"

The mare arching her neck stood on her hind feet, pawing with her front feet in air.

"Oh, what a darling!" exclaimed Madeleine Van Rancken.

"She will race Monsieur's Black Duke any day for honour," said Red Rory with a bow to Freddy Fielding.

The threatened storm clouds were blown away. The good-humoured crowd laughed, cheered, offered and took private wagers, while Colonel Gregory and M. Bédard arranged with Freddy Fielding and Red Rory the details of the race.

"Very clever, by all the powers!" said Fitz-Gibbon.

"Who is he, Christine?"

"You heard M. Bédard, Madeleine. A habitant-Highlander. A Fraser father and grandfather, habitant mother and grandmother. I've known him since he was a wee one. Two years in Edinburgh, hunter, trapper, fisherman, dog-racer, horse-racer, and a devil to fight. One of the Seigneur Colonel Fraser's censitaires. Gardez le cœur, ma chérie," said Christine with a laugh. "He is dangerous."

The American girl's head went up, but her eyes were like two stars and on her cheeks burned two red spots. The people began to move away. It was the hour for the habitant's dinner.

"For Heaven's sake, Miss Christine, bring him over here. I must get him for my General," implored Fitz-Gibbon.

Miss Christine sprang from her sleigh and went over to Josette, sitting cosily amid her magnificent bearskin robes.

"My dear Josette, you must come and see me," she said. "You are at the Ursulines, are you not?"

"I am visiting my aunt," said Josette. "Alain is studying at the Séminaire and I do lessons with the Ursulines."

"Come to me for a day soon. When? On Saturday? Rory, come here," commanded Christine. "You will bring Josette and Alain to me on Saturday. This is my number." She handed him her card. "Now come over here. The young ladies are dying to see you. Vitesse has quite captured them, not to speak of her master."

Handing the reins to Josette, Red Rory went off with Miss Christine.

"Here he is, young ladies. And, if you are wise, you will let him carry your money next week."

"He will certainly carry mine," said Miss Van Rancken, offering Red Rory her hand. "Oh, I do adore your darling Vitesse. How clever she is! How in the world did she understand you?"

"Oh, she is like me. She does not like their foolish politics," replied Red Rory, standing close by Miss Van Rancken and looking straight at her with his laughing blue eyes.

"She is a wonder," said Fitz-Gibbon. "And bedad you did a clever thing. There was an ugly minute there. I was a bit anxious. By the way, Mr. Fraser," he continued, "the General would be very glad if you would call at his quarters at the Citadel. He is extremely busy with these fortifications. They are not going any too well. I rather think he would like your help with those workmen. Can you come to-morrow afternoon, or better in the morning?" Mr. Fitz-Gibbon's frank man-to-man bearing was irresistible.

"Certainly, Mr. Fitz-Gibbon," said Red Rory. "I am at the General's service. What hour?"

"He is in his office from eight. You might come at ten."

"I shall be there at ten," said Red Rory.

He was moving off when Miss Van Rancken touched his arm.

"Mr. Fraser," she said with the warm colour coming up in her face, "for your race, have you a cutter like

Mr. Fielding's? Oh, I wish you had mine at home. Your carriage is too heavy. It will make a difference. And Vitesse must have every chance." She was speaking eagerly, hurriedly. Her lovely eyes were alight with excitement. "You see you are to carry my money and you must win."

"I shall win," said Red Rory very quietly.

"You seem very sure," said Madeleine Van Rancken.

"Yes. I know Vitesse." His complete confidence seemed to make all questioning unnecessary.

"Josette, Josette, come here, child," cried Miss Christine, beckoning to the girl.

Josette threw down the reins and came running to Miss Christine.

"But Vitesse?" said Miss Van Rancken anxiously.

"Will she stand?"

"Certainly, till I tell her to go," said Red Rory.

"Josette!" Miss Christine's voice was quite imperious.

"I want you to get in beside Mr. Fitz-Gibbon and I want Rory to take Miss Van Rancken once over the course. Madeleine, let her have your place."

Red Rory laughed his gay laugh.

"Miss Van Rancken, we all obey Miss Christine in Malbaie. It is quite useless to try anything else."

"He knows," said Miss Christine. "Many a time I have spanked him for disobedience. I have made him the good boy he is."

Without further words the exchange was made and Red Rory set off down the course at an easy pace.

"Follow him," ordered Miss Christine, and Mr. Fitz-Gibbon's team of French Canadians swung in behind.

"Miss Christine has long been accustomed to rule us all at Malbaie," said Red Rory as they trotted easily down the course. "She is a fine young lady. You must not mind coming with me."

"Mind? My dear Mr. Fraser."

Red Rory laughed aloud at her. "No one has ever

called me Mr. Fraser. I am Red Rory to everyone that knows me."

With a quick blush, the girl said, "But I don't know you, Mr.—"

"Oh, yes. You know me. I am very easy to know. I am a habitant-Highlander, you see."

"Very well then, I, too, shall call you Rory, but my name is Madeleine."

"Ah, that is very different. You are a great lady. Your father is a great padrone, you see."

"How do you know?"

"Oh, I have found out. I always find out what I want to know, when I am interested," said Red Rory with a laugh.

"And you are interested——" Miss Van Rancken paused.

"Very interested, of course. You see I have never seen anyone like you." His manner was so perfectly impersonal, so free of self-consciousness—he might have been talking about Vitesse—that she was puzzled.

"But you have met many girls."

"Yes, many girls, but no young ladies, none like you. Habitant girls, yes, and my cousins in Scotland. But they are all different, you see."

"Well, then, I have never met anyone like you," said Madeleine with a daring look at him. "So we are alike in that."

"No? Perhaps not. Not quite like me, but yet there is nothing wonderful about me."

"Wonderful?" her heart was saying. "Oh, you wonderful boy." Aloud she replied, "Well, then, my name is Madeleine."

"I know," he replied simply.

"All right then, Rory, we understand one another. And we are going to be great friends."

He turned his blue eyes on her with quick surprise, looked at her steadily, and smiled.

"Friends? Oh, no! That would be impossible. I

shall always be your friend, of course, but——” A sudden intensity deepened in his eyes, so steadily looking into hers. “I shall not forget you and I shall always want to serve you.”

“Can friendship be only on one side?” asked the girl with a quick breath. Her heart was choking her. Never had she met a man like this. His simplicity, his perfect frank sincerity, disturbed her intensely.

“Sometimes it must be so,” he replied, looking steadily at Vitesse. “Yes, it must be so.”

“But why?” she asked, her voice unconsciously softening.

“Why? You know why. For friendship, there must be some basis of equality.”

She could not trust herself to speak. Equality? Such a man, with his quiet strength, his mysterious compelling power to shake her heart, she had never met.

“We are at the turn. Now, Vitesse! You hear me? Aha, *ma Petite!*” His voice rang out sharp and with a kind of vibrant snap in it.

Yes, Vitesse knew. Her head went up. She began to step on her toes and to reach for her bit.

Red Rory waved Fitz-Gibbon to the front.

“Go on!” he said. “We will follow.”

Obeying, Fitz-Gibbon turned his team into the upward course and went away at a great pace.

“No, no! Vitesse! Not yet, *ma chérie.*” He shortened his grip on his reins. The mare felt the touch and with a shake of her head quickened her pace. Red Rory laughed at her derisively.

“So, so! Vitesse! Now don’t be foolish! *Doucement! Doucement!* Let them go.” He seemed to be taking her into his confidence, gently remonstrating as if with an impatient child.

The team were some distance ahead.

“Oh, very well then, we’ll go.” At the word “go,” Vitesse gathered herself in two quick springs, then like a smoothly working machine her little feet began to drum

the ice. In ten seconds she was up. Carefully Red Rory turned her out to the side. At once Madeleine was conscious of an increase of speed.

"No, no! No hurry, Vitesse! Don't be rude! Tut, tut! No need for all that speed." She was now at the French Canadians' flanks. As she drew on to their shoulders the team lost their feet and were off at a gallop.

"Well, well! Now, Vitesse. Isn't that very bad form? We must not allow that, my girl. We will go." It was the word she was waiting for. And "go" she did, drawing level with the running team.

"Hold them there! Ah! Just there, little one." Neck and neck they sped along. Red Rory's fingers went creeping up the reins. Feeling the touch the mare shook her head impatiently.

"All right, Vitesse! If you must, why, go!" Short and sharp the word rang out like a pistol shot. With a little squeal of delight the mare seemed to flatten out towards the ice and to shoot forward as if she had previously been trifling with the race. In two breaths' time, so it seemed to Madeleine, she swept past the French Canadians and, with her feet rattling like kettledrums, sped on to the mile mark.

"Three-ten!" exclaimed Madeleine, clutching his arm. "Oh, Rory, Rory, you are a wonder!"

"Vitesse, you mean," laughed Red Rory.

"No, no! She did it because you made her. She would die for you," said the girl. "I know just how she felt. She just loves you."

At the head of the course the horses slowed to a walk and came slowly to the point where the road led from the ice to the hill above. There they paused, allowing the horses to breathe.

"Well, what about it?" cried Miss Christine.

"Go on, Rory. Drive on home," said Madeleine in a low voice. "Don't wait to speak. I don't want to talk to them. Oh, Rory, Rory, this is a great day."

"For me, yes," he said, laughing softly to himself. "The greatest day in my life."

The girl was breathing quick deep breaths as if she had been running the race and not Vitesse. Her hand was still clutching his arm. Wild imaginings were racing through her soul. "What is this that has come to me? I am mad. This boy has taken my senses from me. I must not be a fool. I could fling my arms round his neck." Her eyes were on his lips. She knew just where she would kiss him. "And he is not handsome either. But what a man." She hardly heard him talking. He was telling her things about Vitesse.

"Don't you think so?"

With a laugh she cried, "Yes, yes! Of course!" Again she laughed, a little wildly. She had been mad, crazy. And now she was deriding herself. Behind her Christine was calling her cavalier.

He pulled up and waited.

"Let us go somewhere and have lunch," she cried.

"She must be greatly upset to invite me to lunch," thought Red Rory. For well he knew the high and mighty manner of the daughter of the Seigneur Nairne.

"No, don't come to lunch," said Madeleine, in a low hurried voice. "I would go with you, Rory," she added quickly, noting the change in his face, "but not with them."

"We shall take you home," he said with a gay laugh. "Vitesse must be attended to."

"Surely one of the men can do that."

Josette burst out laughing. "Surely, Miss Christine, you know Rory better than that. But of course you have never seen him do up Vitesse. He will give her two hours at the very least."

"And why not?" exclaimed Miss Van Rancken. "She deserves everything he can give her."

"And she'll get it too. All I can give her." The deep vibrating tone rang through the girl's heart.

"All I can give her." Some day he would say that

to a girl, and that girl's heart would choke her as she listened. Silent she sat at his side while he talked quietly about his mare and the wonderful thing she was.

"You would love to drive her," he said, looking into the girl's eyes again with his straight, thrusting look. "No one has ever driven her but Josette and me."

"And you would let me drive her? You would trust me? How could you?"

"You love her and she would know it."

"How?"

"You could not keep it from her. Your touch, your voice, yourself. She would know."

"Do you mean——?" Dismay filled her heart. Was she so transparent as all that? Could he read her heart so easily, so surely? Hurriedly she began to chatter meaninglessly about many things. He listened in silence with set face.

As they drew near the home of Mademoiselle Vallières, where both Madeleine and Christine were staying, Red Rory drew a deep breath.

"A great day," he said. "My greatest day."

"And mine," she said impulsively.

He gave her one of his straight looks and replied :

"You loved the drive. You will never have a better. Vitesse never went better. I doubt if she ever will. She seemed to know you were here."

"She would never think of me. She was listening to your voice, Rory."

"She would know I was thinking of you. She is very sensitive to what I feel."

"Good-bye, Rory. We will say good-bye now. You have given me a great day, and a great friend."

"A great day. Yes, and a good friend—always—no matter what comes—or who. I am saying now my good-bye to you." There was in his voice the sound of finality as of a last farewell.

"But, Rory, we will—I will—you will come to see me?"

"Come to see you?" His eyes were wide with surprise. "Oh, no! But I will not be able—I am afraid I will never be able to forget." His voice dropped to a husky whisper, his hand dropped swiftly on hers for a single instant. The wild hot blood of the Highlander in him was surging through his heart. As he drew his hand away the girl clutched it, and clinging to it she struggled vainly for her voice. The blue eyes lifted boldly to his were misty. And thus clinging to his hand they reached the door.

It took her some moments to disentangle her feet from the sleigh robes, to find her muff which had dropped to the floor. Then she quickly leaped out and ran to take Vitesse's head in her arms.

"Oh, you darling, you lovely thing," she cried.

"She will kiss you if you ask her," said Red Rory.

"Oh, will you? Come then, baissez-moi."

Delicately the beautiful creature reached for her face with gently nibbling lips.

"Good-bye, sweetheart! No! Au revoir! Au revoir!" She was kissing the mare's velvet nose, but sheltered from the sight of the others by Vitesse's head, her eyes were holding Red Rory's in a lingering, burning gaze. Then gaily she ran up the steps, waving farewell to the others in the sleigh.

"What a glorious drive! What a race! I shall never forget it," she cried. "Oh, never!"

CHAPTER II

PROMPTLY at ten Red Rory tapped at General Brock's office door. An orderly opened to him.

"General Brock wishes to see me," he said.

"What is your name, please?"

"Fraser of Malbaie," he said.

"Come in and sit down. I shall let the General know," said the orderly and passed into the inner office.

Almost immediately he returned, and saying, "The General will see you, Mr. Fraser," ushered Red Rory into the office where a number of gentlemen were sitting. He recognized at once the Governor, and his Secretary, Ryland. Fitz-Gibbon was standing at the back of the General's chair.

"Ah, come in, Fraser. Sit down, won't you," said the General in a kindly voice.

"Thank you, sir," said Red Rory, and remained standing.

"You are of Malbaie?" said the General.

Red Rory nodded. "I was born at Malbaie and have lived there most of my life."

"You are a relative of the Seigneur Fraser?"

"All the Frasers are cousins," said Red Rory with a little smile.

"Clansmen, eh?"

Red Rory bowed.

"You know the habitant?" asked the General.

"I am habitant by my mother's side."

"You have worked with them?"

"I have hunted with them, sailed with them, fished with them, run logs with them."

"Ah! You have run logs with them. In what capacity?"

"I have been a river boss."

"Ah! Good! I thought so. You can handle them?"

"They are easy to handle if you know your job."

"Ah! Good again! How have you found them?"

"The very best."

Secretary Ryland grunted and moved uneasily in his chair.

"Dependable?"

"Utterly."

Again the Secretary grunted.

"Have you ever served in the militia?"

"In the Malbaie company, sir."

"As an officer?"

"As a sergeant, sir."

"Good. They are good soldiers?"

For a single instant Red Rory hesitated.

"That depends upon their officers, sir."

"Hum!" said the Governor.

The Secretary laughed shortly.

Red Rory heeded neither, but kept his eyes upon the General.

"Do you know this country well?"

"I have hunted it on both sides of the river for some miles."

"How far south have you been? On the Richelieu, say?"

"Down to the border, sir."

"You know that country well?"

"I know it."

"Aha! Good! Have you been across the border into Vermont?"

"As far as Albany, sir."

"You know that country?"

"Not well. We do not trap or hunt across the line."

"Do you know the Americans?"

"Some of their hunters and trappers."

"What do you think of them?"

"They are like other people, good and bad."

"Mostly bad, eh?" interjected the Secretary with a laugh.

Red Rory heeded him not.

"Do they mean war?"

"They do."

"Why do you think so? I should be glad to have your frank opinion. You have mingled with them." The General's tone was earnest and frank.

"For many reasons, but chiefly they want Canada. They would feel safer in possession of Canada."

"Safer? Why?"

"On their western frontier, sir. They are afraid of the Indians."

The General glanced at the Governor.

"What do you mean?" asked the Governor.

"They think the Canadians are inciting the Indians against them."

"Inciting the Indians? Pack of lies," said the Secretary.

Red Rory ignored him utterly.

"My Government is utterly opposed to such tactics," said Sir James.

"I have understood so, sir."

"How do you know?" asked Sir James sharply.

"I have talked with the Agents in the West."

"Oh! So you know that there is no truth in the charge that we are inciting the Indians against them."

"Not the Government, sir," said Red Rory.

"Who then? What do you mean?" asked the Secretary.

Red Rory again ignored him.

"You suspect there are Canadians who do?"

"I do," said Red Rory. "Traders furnish the Indians with arms and ammunition."

"Yes! Coureurs de bois," snarled Ryland.

Still Red Rory ignored the man.

"I am afraid it is true, your Excellency," said Brock.

"I have warned them very strictly, but still some of them—— So it is the danger from the West and North they fear?"

"Yes, sir. The Kentucky and Ohio men especially. Virginia, too, is suffering heavily by the blockade."

"And you really think war will come?" said the General, with a new respect in his voice.

"It will come, and soon, sir," said Red Rory confidently.

"What do you mean, soon?"

"Whenever Napoleon moves strongly up the Mississippi."

"Ah, then your habitants will take a hand, eh?" said the Secretary.

Red Rory never looked at him.

"You know your people, Mr. Fraser," said the General earnestly. "If a French army were to come up the Gulf, what would the Canadians do?"

"Fight, sir," said Red Rory with quiet conviction.

"For France, eh?" said Sir James.

"For Canada, your Excellency."

"But not for Britain?"

"Yes, certainly for Britain. It would be the same thing, your Excellency."

"Hardly, my man. Napoleon would promise them independence, anything, everything."

"They would not heed Napoleon."

"Why not?" said Sir James quickly.

"For one thing, the priests hate Napoleon, your Excellency."

"The priests!" exclaimed the Secretary wrathfully.

"A lot of damned traitors."

Red Rory's lips tightened, his hands hardened into fists, but not a word did he speak.

"Mr. Fraser, this is interesting and to me exceedingly valuable," said Brock very gravely. "May I ask you frankly—you need not answer unless you like—but from your knowledge of the Canadians, in case of war with the United States in which the French would join hands with the enemy, do you think they would be loyal to Britain?"

"They would, sir. Anything else would be madness. But they need leaders they know and trust."

"Such as?" said the Governor.

"Such as Colonel Panet, Captain Taschereau," answered Red Rory, looking him straight in the eye.

The Secretary laughed in excess of scorn.

"Your Excellency, will you let me speak?" said Red Rory.

"Go on," said the Governor angrily.

"These men have been dismissed from their positions

in the militia, for what cause is no business of mine. But I know those men. I have worked with them. They are loyal to Canada, yes, your Excellency, and loyal to you. Their people trust them and will follow them. They may not be equal to your skilled officers. They are not. But they are true men, and give them a few months under General Brock and they will be good officers. If the Americans come—and they will come—you will need these men. Why not have them fit? Believe me, I know them. They are worthy of your trust.”

Red Rory’s manner was earnest, respectful and fearless. The Governor was obviously impressed. Two years ago he had dismissed for political reasons these and others of the French Canadian officers from their commands in the militia. One of many similar blunders for which the bitter hostility and vicious bigotry of his Secretary and the clique of self-seeking placemen that surrounded the Governor were largely responsible. Sir James Craig was, however, an honest man, with a generous and noble heart, and, in spite of his hostility towards his political enemies, the earnest and fearless words of Red Rory made a deep impression upon him. His evil genius, however, was at his elbow.

“Trust them?” snarled the Secretary. “They are a lot of traitors, every damned Papist of them.”

Red Rory stepped quickly towards the Secretary, his eyes blazing with such fury that the man sprang up and, upsetting his chair, stepped backward. For a moment Red Rory stood facing him, his eyes full upon his face, then moved quickly back to his place. Fitz-Gibbon moved swiftly forward.

“Your Excellency,” said Red Rory in a very quiet voice, “the only traitors in Canada are those who set one class of citizens of this country against another. It is your presence only that prevents me from dealing with this—traitor as he deserves.”

“Silence, sir!” thundered the Governor. “General, call the guard.”

"It will not be necessary, your Excellency," said Brock quietly. "Mr. Fraser is quite controlled."

"Then will you kindly excuse me?" said the Governor, rising.

"Certainly, your Excellency," said Brock, moving towards the door with his visitors and followed by Fitz-Gibbon.

Returning from the door, Brock came back to Red Rory with hand outstretched.

"Mr. Fraser, I beg to apologize for the indiscretion, the impertinence of that—that—the Secretary, and to compliment you most warmly upon your very fine courtesy and self-control."

Red Rory bowed low with flaming cheeks.

"Fitz-Gibbon, place a chair for Mr. Fraser."

Red Rory remained standing.

"Come, come, Fraser, sit down, sit down. I have much to say to you. Sit down!" said the General, taking his seat.

Very slowly Red Rory took the chair, saying very gravely, "My opportunity will come."

"You must forget it, Fraser. After all, what does it matter what such a man says?"

"He insulted my mother, sir," said Red Rory, his lips trembling.

"Damned cad, sir. Your mother is——"

"My mother is a Roman Catholic and a very noble Christian woman, sir."

"My dear Fraser," said Brock, rising and offering his hand, "again let me apologize. I deeply sympathize with your feeling. But let us say no more about it."

Red Rory took the offered hand, bowed low over it and sat down.

"Fitz-Gibbon, my notes, please," said the General sharply. Fitz-Gibbon sprang to obey. "You have a very fine horse, Fraser, I understand," said the General with a charming smile. "I must see that race if possible."

Fitz-Gibbon assures me that my money would be quite safe in your care."

"The Black Duke is a good horse, but my mare is better, and barring accidents—one never knows what may happen in a horse-race—but barring accidents, she will win."

"Somehow you make me feel she will. There will be more than money on the race. I am sorry that rascal Bédard is your backer."

"Bédard is no rascal, sir," said Red Rory earnestly. "He is hot-headed and not always wise, but he is a loyal Canadian and quite sincere."

"I wish I could think so," said Brock thoughtfully. "You know him well?"

"I have hunted with him. He is a real sport and—well, you get to know a man in the bush," replied Red Rory.

"Well, well, God grant you are right. We shall need every loyal man very soon."

"And you will have them, sir. I pledge you my word you will," said Red Rory with intense conviction.

"Well, to business. We have a lot of building to be done. A great deal of building. It is moving very slowly. Somehow we fail to get from the Canadians the response we would like. I heard how you handled them yesterday. I had a feeling that you could get out of them perhaps—ah—more than some others—more in fact than any man I know at present. What do you say? Are you free to take them on?"

Red Rory thought for a few moments. "I am free," he said slowly, "but I do not know those men. They are of the militia, I believe."

"They are, but no one would think so to see them move. They are not my men, I need hardly say."

Red Rory smiled broadly.

"And they may thank the saints they are not," said Fitz-Gibbon fervently.

"Could you do anything with them?"

"What is to be done?" inquired Red Rory.

The General spread out some plans upon the table.

"I am trusting you, Fraser," he said, his bright blue eyes full upon the young man's face.

"My grandfather was of the Royal Emigrants," he said simply. "He was wounded at Le Sault Malabot, and my father went with the 78th. He was killed in 1799."

"I would to God, my boy, Sir James had heard you say that. He would have made short work of that—that Secretary of his. These are the plans, then."

For a full hour he explained the details of the work still to be done.

"And this must be finished before I depart for Upper Canada."

"And when must you go, may I ask, sir?"

"In six weeks, two months at the latest."

"Two months!" exclaimed Red Rory. "And the material, the timber, the stones, the lime. Where are they to be got?"

"The Quarries are down below, near the river; the timber in the Cove, piled on the ice; the lime we shall have to burn. God knows how we are to get the stuff together."

"You can commandeer anything you need, sir?"

"Yes, thank God. I have a free hand for that. Sir James is in full accord. Can it be done?"

"It can, sir, on one condition."

"Name it."

"That you allow me to pick my men."

"From the militia?" The General's voice suggested doubt.

"No, sir. From Malbaie. If you should give me a letter to the Seigneur Fraser and Madame Nairne at Malbaie, it can be done. Not otherwise."

"Thank God!" exclaimed Brock, rising and offering his hand. "You take a load off my heart, sir. I believe you can put it through. Fitz-Gibbon, you will see that

those letters are written and that every demand of Mr. Fraser is complied with in every particular. You have *carte blanche* in this matter, Mr. Fraser, and you carry my entire confidence. Thank God! Thank God! What a relief! When do you want the letters?"

"This morning, sir. I shall wait for them. I shall leave for Malbaie at once."

"But—but——" Fitz-Gibbon hesitated.

"What is it? Out with it," said Brock sharply.

"The—the race, sir."

"Ah!"

"I shall be back in time, sir."

"How far is it?"

"Eighty miles, sir."

"And the race when?"

"In six days, sir."

"Good Lord! It can't be done! Impossible!"

"It can be done, sir. I shall take Vitesse, my mare, the first forty miles. That will be seven hours' easy going, leave her there with a friend and do the rest on racquets."

"Snow-shoes, sir," explained Fitz-Gibbon.

"It can easily be done in three days and a half. Less if necessary. But I do not wish to hurry my mare. That will allow a day and a half for accidents and a day for rest in Malbaie. Two jaunts of forty miles is nothing for Vitesse with a day and a half's rest between."

"And yourself? Forty miles and forty miles?"

"Yes, sir, with a day's rest between. It is nothing. I shall need half a day at Malbaie."

Brock's eyes rested upon him for a few moments.

"Fitz-Gibbon, the letters I shall give you at once. They will be in your hands—you are at the Hotel Royale, I understand—within an hour."

The General rose and went with him to the door.

"Would to God all Canadians were like you, young man. This country would take some beating, eh, Fitz-Gibbon?"

"True as the Gospel, sir. But the lad Rory, here, is half a Highlandman."

"Ah! I am not likely to forget that. Farewell, sir, and God speed you."

CHAPTER III

ON leaving the General's presence, Red Rory spent an hour looking over the lines of the fortifications and comparing them with the sketch which General Brock had put into his hands. His survey of the ground and of the actual work to be overtaken filled him with dismay. The work as viewed from the actual terrain upon which it was to be carried out was quite different from that set forth in the plans. Had he promised too much? His heart sank within him. He had given his word, however. If he failed it would be only after he had given his all to its accomplishment. No man could do more. His first duty was to get his mare ready for her journey, and then himself.

Soon he was busy attending his beloved Vitesse, rubbing, brushing, bandaging and all the while entertaining his habitant friends with tales of the delights of the great city, which though but some forty miles away most of them had never seen. The great *magazins* of the merchants, the jewellers' windows, the *boulangeries*.

"But you have seen them, Théophile Gagnon. You know."

"Ah, most truly," sighed Théophile with rolling eyes.

"And every afternoon on the Parade, the band playing, and in the cabarets at night the dance and song," went on Red Rory, elaborating his theme.

"And you, Red Rory, why are you abandoning all this?"

"Not me. Only for a day. I am on a mission, a secret mission, for the great General Brock. But of this, no word."

"Certainly not! Who would be so base as to betray a secret of Red Rory's?"

"The truth is, great doings are at hand! Doings that will shake Canada to its foundations!"

"Aha! Listen to that!"

"War! The Bostonians, the old enemies of Canada are soon to be on the trail up the Richelieu. They mean to capture Montreal. But Quebec, the invincible, will hurl them back as once before, you remember?"

"Ah, yes. We remember. Have we not heard our fathers tell? And your Gran'père, eh, Rory?"

"But this time they will come in thousands and Quebec must be ready. The fortifications must be rebuilt, the big guns mounted. The Quebec habitants are busy at the work, but what can be done with those useless Quebec men, lazy, worthless fellows?" He gave them a graphic description of what he had seen on the walls, only two days ago, and of how the great General Brock called him into council. He wanted men, men of strength and courage, men who knew how to work. These useless men of the city! How could the work ever be finished in time?

"'Mon Général,' I said. 'You want men of the woods and of the river! Men who are not afraid of work! Men of the axe! Men who can handle timber and stone!' 'Ah, yes, but where can such men be found?' 'I can find them.' 'You? And where?' 'My own comrades of the woods and the river at Malbaie.' 'Go and get them, a hundred of them if you can.' The same day I leave for Malbaie. I am on my way. The day after to-morrow I shall return and announce to the great General Brock, 'I have a hundred men of Malbaie. Your fortifications will be built in time!'"

"Aha! Corvée?" murmured a voice.

"Corvée!" exclaimed Red Rory with unutterable scorn. "Is that you, Baptiste Duhamel? Do you not know that the corvée died with your grandfather? No, my friends. Good money and good food, soup, meat,

potatoes, every day and in abundance. And every night a dance for any that like it. Yes, one hundred men from Malbaie will show those Quebec habitants how things can be done."

"There are good men at Baie St. Paul as well," said Théophile.

"Assuredly! But of course, Théophile Gagnon, I know better my own old friends of Malbaie."

"But you know me, Red Rory. Have we not hunted the woods together?" said Théophile. "Am I not as good a man with the axe as any Malbaie man?"

"That you are and I should be glad to have you, but—well, we shall see."

"And me too, Red Rory! And me! And me!"

"Yes, yes, but—well, I shall see. Indeed it may be good to have two gangs, one from Baie St. Paul as well. Yes, I must think of that. Well, now I must eat."

"But of course, Red Rory. My home is open and Thérèse is waiting for us," said Théophile.

"Thank you, thank you, Théophile. I have my own paquet here, but if you think——"

"Your own paquet! Would you insult me and my good wife?"

"Very good, thank you many times, Théophile. And, Théophile, have your axe sharp and your paquet ready for the day after to-morrow. We may have another excursion like old times, eh?"

"And me too, Rory! And me! And me!"

"We shall see, we shall see. Good night, my friends. There are good men in Baie St. Paul." And Rory, shaking hands all round, making no promises, but awakening hopes, made off with the exultant Théophile to enjoy the hospitality of the good Thérèse.

It was still early morning when Red Rory slid down the steep side of Pointe au Pic into the village of Malbaie; the smoke, the smoke from whose morning fires, standing like pillars in the still frosty air, showed that the good citizens were preparing breakfast.

With cries of welcome and with many tears Red Rory was received by his mother into the bosom of his family, the old Gran'père Sandy Fraser, iron-hearted as he was, trumpeting into his handkerchief as he gripped the boy's hand. While at breakfast, the old Gran'père listened doubtfully to Rory as he told his mission.

"A hundred men? Yes, there are a hundred lazy loafers in the village and more. But to build fortifications in Quebec for Sir James Craig? I doubt it. There is an evil spirit abroad in this parish. The recent election shows that. How was it that Brassard, a habitant, defeated M. Bouchette? Hatred of the Council and of Sir James Craig. The people are greatly excited over the struggle in the House of Assembly. Damned lot of traitors! No! The Governor will get no Malbaie men for his fortifications."

"How does the Curé feel?"

"The Curé? Well, the Curé is for his people and for his Church. He hates the Bostonians, of course, as heretics and murderers. But he is with his people in their struggle against the Governor and his Council. He is a good man and a wise man, however, and he well knows the hope of the colony, of the people, and his Church lies not with the revolutionaries of America."

"The dread in the Governor's mind is that of Napoleon and a French army fighting side by side with the Americans."

"Napoleon! Try the old Curé with Napoleon! Napoleon is the incarnate Antichrist with Père Courtois."

"I shall see M. Courtois at once," said Red Rory.

"But, my son, you are not eating. See these sausages and the fried potatoes. You will get no better, not even in Quebec."

"In Quebec, ma mère? Never in Quebec have I tasted such sausages, and with the maple syrup they are archangels' food. It was worth while my long journey to eat this breakfast."

With the shrewd old Gran'père Sandy Fraser, and his

wise little mother, Red Rory laid out his plan of campaign. First, the Curé must be won. A gentleman of the old régime, an émigré, exiled from France by the execrable atheists of the Revolution, he loathed the Government of France as the scum of Paris, and Napoleon, the upstart canaille, he hated as he did the Devil himself.

"Would you come with me?" Red Rory asked his grandfather.

"Me! No, my boy. The Curé is a gentleman and treats me with great politesse, but he does not fraternize with me. No! No! Your mother, now, he adores."

"Ah, ma mère!" Red Rory looked at his mother.

"Yes, Rory. Ah, if you were only a son of the Church! But I will not trouble you. I keep my promise to your father. I was thinking of making my confession this morning. I will tell him you are here. But, I will say nothing about the fortifications of Quebec. The Curé is very wise."

"But, ma mère, you too are wise. None wiser in all Canada. And you know this is no question of French against English in our own country. It is Canada against the American invader who would love to make this country another state of the Republic. And where would your Curé be then?"

"Ah," she said, shaking her wise head. "Where indeed with all those Bostonians making us all heretics. No, no, my son, we are much better as we are. I must away to the Curé."

Red Rory's visit to the Curé gave him an hour of such keen cross-examination as left him gasping. The old gentleman he found keenly alive to the issues at stake. He dismissed the local quarrels at Quebec between the Assembly and the Governor with a wave of the hand.

"It is all wicked folly," he said. "The Governor is a soldier, not a statesman. He forgets that the members of the Assembly are citizens, striving for their rights, not soldiers to obey orders."

"He is honestly striving to do his duty, Father Courtois, under great difficulty."

"Yes, yes, but he has no finesse, no wisdom to deal with hot-tempered children, who must be humoured, not ordered about."

"He has very poor advisers," said Red Rory. "That man Ryland, for instance——"

"Ryland! A stupid bigot. But, after all, these are small affairs compared with an American invasion. What strength has General Brock?"

"Forty-five hundred regular soldiers, to defend twelve hundred miles of frontier. And the militia."

"Militia!" With a wave of his pipe the Curé dismissed the militia from consideration. "And the Americans. What strength have they?"

"Some six thousand regulars and a possible militia force of four hundred thousand of which they have called up some thirty-five thousand."

"And resources unlimited. The situation is very grave indeed. The point of attack, as in 1776, will of course be Montreal, which cannot be defended. Yet the fortification of Quebec is very essential. But impossible. An army of ten thousand with abundant artillery will overwhelm us in Lower Canada—Upper Canada matters not—Quebec is the key."

"And is weak in its defences. Hence fortifications, and immediately."

"True, but can Sir James Craig persuade the people whose leaders he affronts to aid him in building fortifications?"

"Can I get one hundred from Malbaie, father? If so, others will come and I can get the fortifications built. After all, it is only the finishing touches that are necessary."

"You are a bold young man," replied the Curé with a pitying smile.

"You think I cannot get them. I begin to fear you are right. My grandfather says I cannot. For one thing M. Brassard will oppose."

"Ah! Brassard? The young Brassard is even less than the Father. Pouf! Wind!"

"But he won the election to the Assembly."

"Pouf! Wind!" said the Curé again. "But, still, how many days can you give to this?"

"One day, Father. I have given my word."

"You were bold! Still, one day may be better than ten. You have seen Seigneur Fraser? No? Nor Madame Nairne."

"No, Father. I came first to you. I have letters to them from General Brock; but, if you say no, I may as well go back a failure."

"General Brock!" said the Curé thoughtfully. "That is better. I hear good things of him. He is wise. He is politic. That is good. We shall not speak of M. Bédard and 'Le Canadien,'" he added with a smile.

"But M. Taschereau! He is a true man, and M. Papineau and M. Panet. They are sincere men. I have had much talk with them. They are strong for defence. But, alas, they are out of the militia now. That was Ryland's doing!"

"Well, well, we may speak of M. Taschereau or M. Papineau or M. Panet. But of M. Bédard and 'Le Canadien,' no. Our people are simple people. One idea in the head at one time is enough."

"You are going to help me!" exclaimed Red Rory.

"You are a patriot, sir!"

"Patriot? Ah! Something better, let us hope. But go with your letters. And now I will walk through the village with you. But nothing just now about fortifications. See your old friends, Rory. You have many. They trust you and they adore you. And so they should."

Red Rory's throat swelled. He could not find his voice. The wise old Curé needed no words of thanks, however. He was skilled from long experience in reading faces.

Very deliberately they walked together through the village, the Curé with his arm through Red Rory's. It

was something in the nature of a public reception for Red Rory.

"Do not hurry, my son. Speak to your neighbours. They will be glad to see you."

As they went on, the villagers came clustering about the Curé and his protégé, eager with greetings, with inquiries as to the doings in the city.

"And what is this we hear about Vitesse?"

"Who has been telling you tales, Alphonse Harvie?"

"Oh, me, I read in 'Le Canadien.' How dat Vitesse she mak' foolish on dat Englishman's horse."

"No, no! Not yet. Next week perhaps."

"Aïe! What is this, Rory?" said the Curé, an incorrigible lover of horse-flesh. "You are racing your Vitesse?"

"Yes, Father, but not for money, just for honour."

"Aïe, that is better. For the glory of the Canadian horse."

"Yes, bred here in Malbaie. From an English horse, the Seigneur Fraser's, Father, it is true, but right here in Malbaie, where we have good horses and good men!"

"Some of them, some of them. But how came the race?" Red Rory felt the pressure of the Curé's hand upon his arm and at once responded with a vivid account of the incident, touching somewhat lightly on M. Bédard's part in the same. The men of the village were gathered about listening with absorbed interest, keen to learn all details.

"And Vitesse, she is good form?" asked the Curé with a pleasant smile. "You know Malbaie must not be shamed in Quebec. You would not like that, my friends?"

Vociferous assurances answered the Curé's question. Red Rory testified to her prime condition. It would be a great race, for the Black Duke was an English imported horse of the very best breed and evidently well trained in America. A race worth seeing. Every man was at once filled with an intense desire to see the race next week.

"Some of you may see it, indeed. But of this later," said Red Rory.

Meantime the Curé and Red Rory must go on. They were about to call upon Madame Nairne, the lady of the Seigneury, to whom he bore a message from her daughter, Miss Christine. With great cheering and with wishes and prayers for his success, Red Rory went on his way with the Curé.

They found the lady of the manor in the great hall ordering her household duties, with her bailiff awaiting an interview. Most gracious was her welcome. The Curé, though not of her faith, was an old friend, in whose work she took a deep interest, and Rory had run in and out of her house as child and youth.

"And what brings Red Rory back from the city?" inquired the lady.

"Important affairs, Madame, indeed," said the Curé with a smile.

"I bear you greeting from your daughter, Miss Christine."

"She is well, I hope. Her last letter was not very cheerful."

"She complains of rheumatic pains, but she is cheery as ever and indeed she and an American friend drove with me as far as Baie St. Paul. And she sent you loving greeting," said Red Rory, a little colour coming into his cheek as he remembered the nature of the greeting.

"Aha! She sent me a kiss, I doubt. She was always fond of you, Rory. Well, young man, why do you not deliver her greeting aright? Hoots, ye need not blush at bussing an auld wife like me."

Promptly and with great gallantry, Red Rory rose and delivered her greeting, kissing the old lady on both cheeks, to her great delight.

"And what is your ploy here, Red Rory and M. le Curé, forbye? For I know well he is not simply making one a call at this hour of the day."

"For which, Madame, we should make apology.

The urgency of the young man's business is my only excuse."

At this Red Rory delivered the letter from General Brock, whom her husband had known well and she slightly. At once she was keenly interested.

"What can I do, Father Courtois?" she cried. "You know how my censitaires are. And Colonel Fraser's are not much better. If we mention war as imminent, only our Scottish folk, and not all of them, will be interested. However, fortifications are not necessarily war. See the Seigneur Fraser, ask him to come to me and we will make our plans. But it is upon the Curé we must rely, Rory. He has the authority. Well, away to the Seigneur Fraser, Rory. There is no time to be lost. Away!"

"How like her mother is Miss Christine," said Rory as they set off for the Seigneur Fraser's manor-house. *

"A truly remarkable personality," said the Curé. "She loves her people, and lives among them. She is an able administrator. She makes farms and sees that they are kept clean. She builds mills and makes them pay. She is a veritable mother to her sick and poor. But these habitants are a peculiar people. Proud, sensitive, independent——"

"Independent, Father? Not with M. le Curé," said Rory with a smile.

"Yes, even with me, independent, for a time at least, and must be humoured like children. They do not understand the big world outside. But they love their own places and their own things. When the time comes they will fight for the things that are theirs. They are not like the people in England—nor in America. But fortifications—ah, well, we will not trouble them with war to-day. They will like a change, to see the city, the stores, the crowds, the fun, the cabarets and, yes, the horse-race as well. These are the things that attract children."

As they went to call upon the Seigneur Fraser, Red Rory pondered the words of this wise old man who had

experienced the ways of men and was deeply versed in the subtleties of the human soul. With him Rory felt himself a child.

As they neared the Seigneurie the Curé observed :

"You are well acquainted with the Seigneur?"

"Well, he is my godfather, but he is that to many others in the village. He was very fond of my father and grieved deeply over his death, but with my old Gran'père he is different."

"Yes, yes. The Gran'père was too much *coureur de bois* in his young days."

"Yes, my Gran'père was no farmer. Soldier, fisherman, hunter, trapper, anything but farmer. And the Seigneur does not easily bear opposition."

"He will not oppose you in this. No ! No ! He will be for ordering out at once the whole village to the work. We cannot pass him by, but he will be difficult. We must not be too military. This is a *habitant* enterprise. A good thing for men who need to make a little money which they can spend profitably on their farms and stock. He is a keen farmer, the old gentleman."

"Do I not know it ? But you speak to him, Father."

The old Colonel was delighted to see his godson, though he began to reprove him at once for his careless and lazy habits and for his neglecting the bit of land which his grandfather held and spasmodically worked.

"But the young man is very thrifty," said the Curé, "for all that he goes off now to the woods and now to the city. Even at this present time he has a very fruitful and profitable business on hand. Explain, Rory, to the Seigneur."

Red Rory presented General Brock's letter. The old soldier read it once, twice, with deepening excitement.

"War !" he exclaimed. "And immediately, I imagine. Well, we must be prepared."

"Perhaps not immediately, Seigneur Fraser," suggested the Curé. "But this is an excellent stroke of business for your godson to be asked to take charge of such an

important bit of work. And a very fine compliment to your censitaires to be called to this service. They will be all the better of some real work to do. There is very little to do about Malbaie. Some wood to get, pigs to kill, but not steady hard work which keeps men right."

"You are entirely right, my dear Curé. Lazy fellows, their wives will be glad to get them out of the house for a time. I will call them up at once, Rory. When do you want them?"

"I thought I would go among them and choose my men, if you think well of that," said Rory.

"Indeed, Rory, you must be careful in your choosing. You do not want men for the city who will be spending their time in the cabarets. No, no. You will need to be very careful," said the Curé.

"I thought I should like the aid of the Seigneur and your help too, Father. I should like to submit the names for approval."

"Very good. Show these to me. There are some of them much better at home. Some of them indeed need watching, M. le Curé, in these difficult times." The Seigneur shook his head gravely.

"It is so," said the Curé very gravely. "There are very strange ideas going about. And with the American Republic threatening us——"

"Again you are right, sir," agreed the old soldier warmly. "Some there are who would be much better in a safe place. I have my eye on them. No, Rory, you want none of that kind with you. Submit the names to me, I will eliminate the dangerous ones. The Curé, too, will give valuable assistance. You have seen Madame Nairne?"

"I had a message from Miss Christine to her," said Rory diplomatically. "I consulted her about this matter. She approved heartily and sent us to you."

"Very good, very good. A most wise and loyal lady. If my old friend, Colonel Nairne, were only alive. But

ah ! I forget. The years have done their work with us both, M. le Curé. Old sticks ! Old sticks ! ”

“ Not so old. The sap is still running strong ! ” said the Curé, shaking hands warmly with his old friend.

“ Now then, Rory, there are two or three men that must be taken care of. Sébastien Trudelle, a great politician, and Polydore Hammel, the giant, you know him ? ” said the Curé with a little smile.

“ He knows me, father,” said Red Rory with a laugh. “ He will give no trouble. He is not a bad fellow. But, anyway, I do want him particularly.”

“ Not a bad fellow, but too fond of his whisky blanc. And worst of all there is Philippe La Roque, an orator. Ah ! Remarkable ! He would like to think himself an atheist. But when he is ill he will hurry his wife to the priest. A republican and personal friend, so one would think, of Napoleon himself. Well, God go with you. Where do you go first ? ”

“ I must talk with my mother.”

“ Ah ! A wise woman, Rory, and a good. And women love and reverence her. You are a fortunate boy ! Yes, yes ! Take her advice.”

As a result of his talk with his mother, Rory went sauntering in and out of the little houses of Malbaie, drinking endless cups of tea and milk and home-made wine of varying flavours and potencies. He was a great favourite with the mothers and children. He was quite frank with the women as to his purpose in coming home, and they were all eager that their men should go. It would be a great relief to get them out of the way. The good wife, La Roque, was only too glad that her husband should get something to do.

“ Mon Dieu ! It would be peace in the house ! Talk, talk, talk, from de wake of de sun till he sleep ! Take him wit you, Roree, and kip him for two mont's.” There was no word of war or of preparations for war. They were building walls about the Château St. Louis.

In the afternoon, Red Rory began his interview with

the men. He took care, first of all, to enlist as his lieutenant his great friend André McNab, uncle to Alain and Josette McNab, a descendant of one of the Fraser Highlanders who had settled in Malbaie, and, though some years his senior, his comrade and chum in many a hunting expedition. McNab was short, wiry, powerful beyond any in the village with the possible exception of Polydore Hammel, fearless as a lion and loyal to his heart's core. André was keen to go and within an hour had secured two-score volunteers whose names Red Rory entered in a little red-covered book. Soon a crowd began to gather about the church door, the public meeting-place of the village, where Red Rory took his stand to answer questions and make explanations. In the midst of the crowd was Philippe La Roque, "talking big."

"What is this work? Building walls? And what for? And who is paying for it? And how much a day? And where would we live?" Philippe was asking in a loud voice.

"You will be living at home, Philippe La Roque—if the good Madame La Roque can put up with you. I do not find your name on my list."

"But you tell us nothing at all. 'Come and work.' That is all."

"What is this building, Rory? Perhaps you will tell the people about it. There is no harm in that, eh?"

"Oh, is that you, Sébastien Trudelle? I am afraid it will be too hard for you. There will be little time for talk."

A shout of laughter greeted the remark, for his neighbours knew well Sébastien's weakness.

"But," remonstrated Sébastien pleasantly, "why all this mystery? What kind of building is it? Who is the boss?"

"I am the boss, Sébastien, as you will find out if you are allowed to come."

"And who will pay for it?" said Sébastien with a sneer. "His Excellency, Sir James Craig, the good

friend of the habitant, eh? I have heard of this building, my friends. This is the beginning of war. If you like war, very good. You will say good-bye to your wife and children. First the fortifications and then the uniform. Aha! No. There will be no room for me, M'sieu Roree." A dead silence fell upon the crowd. War! Ah! That was different. They knew something of that. It was an old trick that. The English Government had tried the same thing before with their fathers. A buzz of talk ran through the crowd. The strife between the Governor and his English friends against the French and their leaders in the Assembly was quite well understood throughout Lower Canada.

"My friends," said Rory, "there may be war and that before very long. But this is not war. I will tell you all I know about it."

Rory then mounted the platform before the church door from which all announcements were wont to be made, and began his story.

"I was driving my mare, Vitesse, for a little exercise along the Parade. I stopped a moment to talk with some friends."

"Friends? Perhaps M. Roree will give us the names of his friends," suggested Sébastien smoothly.

"My friends? Most certainly. Your very good friends too. Miss Christine Nairne, I think you know her, and——"

"Ha! Good!" A shout went up. The gay Miss Christine was a favourite in Malbaie.

"Miss Christine was good enough to stop me and inquire about my mare, Vitesse, who is to race, a trotter race next week, and——"

Again a cheer went up for Vitesse.

"What horse, Rory?" inquired a voice.

"An English horse, imported to America and from there to Quebec."

"But Vitesse will win!" the voice cried, and again a cheer broke forth.

"Yes, Vitesse will win. My friend, M. Pierre Bédard, thinks so too. At least his money says so. It will be a great race!"

M. Bédard, eh! Ah! He was a good friend of the habitant.

"'cré tonnerre! What a race! What day is it, Rory? And where? Tell us about it, mon vieux!"

So Rory, nothing loath, gave an account of his experience with the Black Duke and of the challenge offered by Colonel Gregory.

"I could not refuse that challenge for the honour of Malbaie."

A fierce yell swept the crowd. The supreme passion of the habitant in a horse-race was aflame. A full and eager discussion of the race began, of the chances for Vitesse, of the money to be won.

"You will put some money on Vitesse for me, Rory," begged Polydore Hammel.

"If you believe in Vitesse, Polydore, most certainly."

"Mille diables! I know Vitesse. And I know you too, Rory. You will take my money!"

"His-s-h! Le Curé!" The Presbytery door opened and M. le Curé was seen approaching the crowd.

"But the building?" again suggested the smooth voice of Sébastien Trudelle.

"Most certainly. I interrupted," said Rory with a laugh, and then proceeded with his story of how he had become involved in the building project. "So you see, my friends, it is for me and for you a simple proposition which will be completed with the erection of the walls. After which every man of Malbaie will return to Malbaie with his money in his pocket except so much as he pays for his tabac and for the new dress for his wife or his sweetheart. Of course I can get men nearer Quebec, at Ste. Anne's, or Baie St. Paul. But I see the Curé. The Father will forgive me for speaking from this place. M. le Curé, I was asked to explain my errand to Malbaie."

The Curé waved his hand. "Go on, Rory. Let me hear all about it. You have already told me something. You may tell my people as well."

"I have told them, Father, but Sébastien Trudelle has assured them it is war. That they may never return."

"War? Ah! That is another thing," said the Curé, mounting the platform and taking his place beside the young man. "My good people, I have already warned you many times that war is threatened. That is my duty. I have told you to be prepared for war. That, too, is my duty and yours. The man who will not make all preparation to defend his country against a wicked and unscrupulous enemy is a coward and a traitor to his country. A few days ago in my paper I read that the American President said that, if the American army invades Canada, our people would not defend themselves. They love our country. Yes, my friends, they love our country so much that they would make it one of their states. And what then would become of you, of our beautiful French language, our institutions, our holy Church? That is what America would do to us. And with America is that atheist canaille, Napoleon. If he were to come, he would make short work of us. But the British fleet will not let him come. And the citadel of Quebec will stand against the Bostonians. So, my friends, this is a good bit of work for our dear country." He raised his hands in the Benediction and passed back into the Presbytery.

Through the afternoon and evening Red Rory was busy enrolling his men. In spite of all that Sébastien Trudelle and Philippe La Roque could say, the men of Malbaie had signed their names in a book promising to go to the city for six weeks, where there was so much to see and where there was good meat to be had three times a day and money for their work as well. The men were organized into companies of twenty, with a captain over each, and over all were two bosses, André McNab and the giant Polydore Hammel. All who had horses and sleighs

were to bring them, and of course every man his own sharp axe, and every mason his tools.

When all had signed his book, Red Rory submitted the names to the Seigneur for his inspection.

"Ay! I do not see the names of Trudelle and La Roque here. And you are wise. I should not have permitted them to go. They are useless and dangerous men. They will cause trouble. They must be watched. You have done a good bit of work, Rory. I will send a letter to the Governor. There are things he ought to know. Good-bye and good fortune attend you. Would I were twenty years younger. But there is life in the old dog yet."

Madame Nairne was much pleased at Red Rory's success.

"You will be going back soon," she said.

"To-night," said Red Rory.

"To-night? Do not be foolish, young man. Rest you here the night and I will send you on in my carriage to-morrow."

"Ah, no. I would not think of that," said Red Rory, quite overwhelmed at such condescension.

"Besides, you have had no time with your mother and I know how she feels about her only child. Laddie! Laddie! Mothers have gey queer hearts about their sons."

The strong, kind face was working strangely. He knew that her thoughts were in far India, where her gallant young soldier son, a lad of twenty-one, lay in his lonely grave, and of her youngest, now in Scotland.

"I will stay with my mother to-night," he said gently. "But I shall be away in the morning on my racquets—thank you all the same."

"Hoots, laddie! Start as early as you like, but my carriage and team will take you. Besides, I am sending to my daughter Christine some goodies—she has aye a sweet tooth—and some for yourself forbye."

CHAPTER IV

HE found his mother, as he had expected, waiting for him with supper ready.

As she welcomed him he looked at her with new eyes as the Curé had bidden him. A little woman with the dark hair and ivory skin of the habitant woman, a broad smooth brow, eyes dark, lustrous and seemingly filled with deep clear light, a mouth whose tenderness was saved from sentimentality by a clean-cut and very firm little chin. She had beautiful hands, unspoiled by the toils of the habitant house-wife. She had never been allowed by the men of the house to take on the heavy work of the stable and field. When she spoke she had none of the high nasal twang so frequently heard in the habitant women. Her voice was the naturally soft yet full and resonant voice of the trained alto singer, at once compelling and wistful in its tones. With her son she almost invariably used the English language with a fascinating mingling of the Highland and French cadences in tone. But she had all the Highland idioms. She might have been from the Fraser country in Scotland. Red Rory found himself regarding and appraising his mother to-night with a new interest and a fresh mind.

"Well, Rory lad, you will be weary with your day. A very trying day. But you have got your men?"

"Or rather you got them for me, you and M. le Curé."

"He is a wise man. He would be of great value in Quebec just now. He is educated, and he is tolerant. He has suffered himself from intolerance. He has lost all except his vocation. But knowledge of the world and a tolerant mind will be much needed in this country if I am not much mistaken. Tell me of the Governor and his Council."

"The Governor has been a soldier all his life, mother. Therefore his methods and manners are those of the

barrack-room and the parade-ground. He gives orders and expects obedience, tout de suite. Opposition by those who differ in opinion, as, for instance, the members of the House of Assembly, he regards at once as a personal affront or as treason against the Government."

"That is a pity. If he could know M. Taschereau as we know him in Malbaie! You remember how delightful a gentleman he showed himself when visiting Madame Nairne. And M. Panet also. These are honourable gentlemen."

"True enough, mother. He classes them all with M. Bédard, an honest enough man, but of coarser grain and with a rough tongue and brusque manners."

"Tell me about the Secretary of the Governor. I hear much about him," said his mother.

"There you have the worst enemy of Canada, mother. A narrow intolerant bigot. What he would like to see is French Canada under English rule, English law, English customs, English language, English religion. Literally so. I have heard him myself. The day before yesterday I very nearly had him by the throat. The Governor would have had the guard at me. But General Brock interposed."

"Tell me about it, my son."

When Rory had finished his tale his mother said quietly:

"You will be thanking General Brock some day for what he did for you yon time. You forgot yourself. I do not believe that gentlemen use their hands on gentlemen. The way of the woods, of the lumber camp, are not the ways of the great world. And you must remember you are not of the habitants."

"Habitants!" exclaimed Red Rory. "Why, mother, I am habitant in part."

A slight flush tinged the mother's ivory cheeks.

"Yes, I am habitant and I am not ashamed of habitant blood, but I am the wife of your father, a soldier of the Fraser Highlanders. You are of my blood, but your

name is Fraser. And you must never shame that name by habitant temper or habitant manners."

"But, mother, he insulted you. I have been keeping in my heart the purpose to pull M. Ryland's nose and perhaps slap his cheeks some day."

"That is the purpose of a foolish boy. A big man, and a leader of men as you are to be, must not do silly and boyish things any more. But now, my boy, you must away to your bed."

"A leader of men, mother?" Red Rory's face was very grave, but in his eyes there burned the deep light that glowed in his mother's.

"Yes, that you will be. And so you must not be governed by tempers and desires for revenge. The man who is to serve his country cannot indulge tempers and revenges. He must deny himself those and many other delights."

"But great men lose their tempers, mother."

"Never when they are great, my son." Then after a little silence she added: "True, great men show temper, even furious rage at times, but only to serve their purpose, never when temper has mastered them. That would show them weak. Temper? Yes, but let it serve, not master you."

"Mother, you are a wise woman, and a wise mother too. I would like"—the boy hesitated—"to ask you—something." He paused and fell silent.

The mother's face grew very still. Her hands paused for a moment in their knitting, then went on at increased speed.

"Tell me about the American young lady," she said gently.

"Oh, mother, how did you know?"

"A mother needs not many words. One is enough. You said her name to me, 'Madeleine.' She is beautiful?"

"Yes, mother, there is no one like her. But I am no fool. She is a very great lady. Her father is very

rich. She is of the great Dutch padrones of New York State."

"And you love her, Rory?" The fingers trembled on the knitting.

"No! I have not allowed myself to love her." Rory's voice was determinedly emphatic.

"Ah!" said his mother, her knitting falling into her lap.

"But"—the boy's voice dropped low—"I could—if—if it were only possible. I mean if it wasn't just nonsense."

His mother's lips were set in a thin line, her fingers flying furiously again.

"But I haven't let myself go."

"Is she good?"

"Good?"

"Has she a good, brave, kind, unselfish heart? How does she treat her mother, her father? How does she treat servants and poor people?"

"I—don't—know." The boy stumbled in his words. "You see, I have only been with her about fifteen hours."

"My son, you cannot love what you do not know. Love is a deep thing. It is yourself. You could not give yourself to one that was selfish, mean, cruel, unfaithful. First, you must know something about her, more than her eyes, her voice, her manners, her smile. Wait. Be master of yourself. Who she is makes little difference. You are a Fraser. What she is, that you must know. Meantime, you will keep your hand on your heart."

Rory felt himself a very little boy in the presence of this gentle-voiced, wise, high-souled mother of his, whom he seemed to have just discovered. Keep his hand on his heart! Could he? Yes, he could and he would. And with this resolve he bade his mother good night, kneeling at her side while she said her prayers before the little shrine.

CHAPTER V

"A GLORIOUS morning, eh, Fitz-Gibbon! And this air is like none I have ever breathed! See that gold and purple over Tourmente, there! Where in all the world would you behold such a sight?"

"I was thinking of Gibraltar, General."

"Gibraltar? Yes, very like, except for the sweep, the noble sweep of the river, frozen as it is. The colour upon the red cliffs of Sillery does suggest Gibraltar. But this air! Never at Gibraltar. Ha! These men are putting some vim into their work, eh? Are these the Malbaie men?"

"Yes, sir! They came up yesterday, a hundred strong. They seem the right sort."

General Brock stood surveying the gangs of workmen at their various jobs with kindling eyes.

"Splendid men! Yes! What spring! What verve! And listen to them sing! They seem to enjoy their work. Wonderful! What a difference from the lazy fellows we had here last week! Marvellous! Ah! Do you know what makes the difference?"

"Well, sir, those are men from the woods, lumbermen and——"

"Not at all. They are, of course, different men. Yes, different! But don't you understand? Can't you see what makes the difference? Look yonder!" He pointed to a tall young man in the garb of a *coureur de bois* standing upon an up-jutting rock giving out his orders in a high, clear, ringing voice.

"Listen to him! What a voice! What command! There lies the secret of this swinging, singing team work! Fitz-Gibbon, we must make a militia officer of him. With a few leaders like that we could make soldiers out of that easy-going, sloppy militia of ours! Go fetch him to me!"

Fitz-Gibbon ran over to the young man, who was evidently having some difficulty with his job.

"No, no. That will not do! Pull that down! Here, you, André! That whole wall is rotten! It must come down. Clear it away!"

André came running to the young man and began to explain, gesticulating vehemently. The young man leaped down from his rock to the builders, seized a crowbar, thrust it into a bit of wall and gave a mighty heave. The wall swayed, tottered and fell crashing down the precipice.

"Rotten! We cannot build upon that. Clear the whole thing away! Yes, down to the rock! No, no. Clear the whole thing off." He went along the wall, newly built, striking into joints and heaving whole layers of stone.

"No, André! This must all come down!" He came to a bit of old wall and drove his crowbar at it. "Ah, this is better. This will do. But all this stuff, from this point to the angle yonder, must be cleared away. Get at it!"

With a loud, chanting cry André sprang towards his men and began to give his orders with much vigorous swearing.

Fitz-Gibbon came close to the young man.

"Hello, Red Rory! The General wishes to speak to you."

Red Rory nodded and turned to his captain.

"André. Listen to me. The men of Malbaie must leave behind them a wall that will stand for a hundred years. You have your day's work measured for you, but, if there is rotten foundation or rotten building, your men will work all night pulling down what they have built during the day. Do you understand? And, André, get your head mason to test this mortar. Look at that mortar. Rotten stuff. No more of that!"

"We did not build that, Red Rory."

"Do I not know? I am warning you. You are responsible. Get Polydore Hammel and Théophile Gagnon

"The General wishes to speak to you at once," said Fitz-Gibbon.

"The General wants good work done and I must attend to this now," replied Red Rory. "How much of this work is rotten, God only knows."

Polydore Hammel came running, leaping like a cat for all his huge bulk, from rock to rock. To him Red Rory gave full directions as to the importance of good work. Everything done by the Malbaie men must be good to the rock.

"But certainly, 'cré nom ! What else ?" said Polydore.

"Look about you !" said Red Rory. "Look at that work !"

Up came Théophile panting.

"Ah, Théophile, we are beginning some mason work. You have good masons with you. The men of Baie St. Paul are good builders. None better. Remember, we must not let our good name suffer for other men's fault. You cannot build on rotten foundations. Clear away all bad work first before you lay a stone. And see, all of you," he continued to the group of captains about him, "that only sound and seasoned timbers are laid in these walls. No green stuff. This wall must last till the Judgment Day."

Without further word he turned abruptly away, and never waiting for question or parley. With his orders he laid upon his captains the full responsibility for the results. Then he went his way to the General.

"You are busy," said the General curtly. "So am I."

"That work needed me. Much of what your men have done must be cleared away. It is rubbish."

As he spoke the Governor's equipage drove up with a flourish. The General went to meet him and greeted him heartily.

"Your Excellency is looking better this morning," he said.

"Feeling better ! Much better ! Got rid of that nest

of traitors yesterday. They, at least, shall annoy me no more. I am done with soft measures."

"I returned late to town last night, your Excellency. I have had no news," said the General.

"You will hear it soon enough. But I may as well tell you. You remember the demands of the Assembly that Judges should be deemed ineligible for the House. I finally agreed to their request, largely for the sake of peace, General. I stipulated, however, that Judge de Bonne should retain his seat to the end of this session. Do you know what the rascals did? They actually sent up a remonstrance demanding Judge de Bonne's dismissal at once. That made quite clear their purpose. They are not seeking Government, but anarchy. They are traitors, sir! Thank Heaven it made my duty clear. I did it and consequently feel much better to-day."

"I beg your pardon, your Excellency. You——"

"I dismissed the rascals, turned them out neck and crop. I prorogued the House, sir."

"What else could be done?" said the Secretary. "They are only seeking to embarrass the Government. They are traitors and are seeking opportunity to sell this wretched country to the enemy."

Red Rory with a sharp intake of breath checked an exclamation of rage. He remembered in time his mother's word: "The man who is to save his country cannot indulge tempers."

Ryland turned sharply about. "You were saying ——?"

"Nothing!" said Red Rory.

"Ah! I remember you, young man, I think," said the Governor.

"This is my new executive officer in charge of our building operations," said the General quickly. "His grandfather was one of the Royal Emigrants, was wounded at Sault-au-Matelôt. His father, Sergeant-Major Fraser, was killed in Europe in 1799, when this young man was a lad of ten or so."

"Ah! Sault-au-Matelôt—Fraser—not big Sandy Fraser?"

Red Rory took off his cap and bowed low.

"By Heaven, sir, you have good blood in you!" exclaimed the Governor. "You ought to have some loyalty in you."

"I hope so, your Excellency. I have the good fortune to have a loyal mother."

"Mother?" said the Governor, a shade of doubt in his voice.

"Yes, your Excellency. A habitant mother who brought up her son to fear God and honour the King in whose service her husband gave his life."

"The King? You mean——"

"The King, sir. Your King and mine, and when I told her how, but for your presence, I would have slapped the face of a slanderer and liar who called her traitor, she bade me remember that a man who would serve his country may not yield to his temper." Red Rory's face was white, his eyes like blue steel points, but his voice was smooth as oil and his lips smiling.

The Governor was staring at him with wide-open eyes, then he said :

"Young man, every day thank God for your mother."

They moved forward towards the edge of the rock where the building was going on.

"General, you do not hold my opinion in regard to the loyalty of these people," said the Governor in an undertone.

"Your Excellency, I am convinced they will defend their country, not for our sakes but for their own. Of course, if Napoleon should send an army by any chance up that river——"

"What would this young man say to that, I wonder?" said the Governor.

"Ask him," suggested the General with a smile.

For some minutes they stood watching the men at the building. A spirit of rivalry between the gangs kept them

at high tension in their work. Chaffing, joking, laughing, singing, they were like boys at play.

"Why are they tearing down that new wall?" asked the General of Red Rory. "They are destroying two weeks' work there."

"Bad work, sir. They must have used poor mortar. The wall would not carry any weight, nor the vibration of the guns. We want our walls to stand up against anything."

"Even Napoleon's guns, eh?" said the Governor.

"Napoleon's guns will never attack these walls, your Excellency. The British fleet will take care of him and his guns."

"But if by any chance Napoleon's fleet should elude the British fleet and land an army here, what of your habitants then?"

"You do not believe in my people, your Excellency," said Red Rory. "It is a pity you do not know them better. May I give you the answer to your question which was given me in Malbaie last week by a gentleman of Old France?"

When Red Rory had concluded his recital of the statements of the Curé of Malbaie, the Governor said:

"And who was this gentleman, if I may ask?"

"Certainly. M. Courtois, a gentleman of good family, a trusted friend of the Seigneur Fraser, the Curé of Malbaie, to whom Napoleon is canaille and without whose aid I might have failed to secure so quickly these Malbaie men working down there. Excuse me, General." Red Rory ran down towards a group of men who were struggling with a huge block of stone.

"Ha!" exclaimed the Secretary Ryland. "Talk is easy."

The General deliberately turned his back upon the Secretary, and in clear decisive tones remarked:

"One is glad to hear such testimony, and from such a source, your Excellency. One must not forget that the

situation of to-day in this province is very different from that of 1776."

"That is quite true, General. Perhaps we have not given full weight to certain facts. They are a simple people and ignorant. It is their unscrupulous leaders who are to blame. They are the mischief-makers. That man Bédard is a dangerous fellow. Very dangerous fellow!"

"Only one place for a traitor like him," said Ryland angrily. "If half a dozen of these leaders were behind the bars there might be an end at least to organized resistance to authority."

"That, too, may come," said the Governor.

At this point Red Rory came running back and said to the General:

"I have promised these men two hours off to-morrow afternoon, sir. To see the race," he explained in answer to the General's blank look.

"The race! Ah, yes! I remember." He turned to the Governor. "Fitz-Gibbon was telling me about it. French horse. By the way, it is your horse, Fraser?"

"Yes, sir. Bred in Malbaie from the Seigneur Fraser's stallion. Whalebone stock."

"Yes, against young Fielding's imported British stallion, trained in this newfangled kind of racing in America. Very fine horse, I understand."

"The finest in the country," said Ryland.

"Fitz-Gibbon favours the native horse," interposed the General. "He is quite decided in his opinion. I am inclined to back his judgment. That is one thing Fitz-Gibbon does know, a horse. As a matter of sentiment I ought to back the English horse, I suppose, in spite of his American training, but I can't afford to lose money."

"The Black Duke I happen to know has an excellent record, and he has been trotting steadily on the ice this winter," said Ryland. "It is hardly possible that any scrub mongrel from this country could win against him."

"For this time, Ryland, I am going to disregard your judgment. I don't believe you are a racing man," said the Governor with a laugh.

"No, I am no racing man, especially these trotting races. Give me a firm turf and a real race. No, I am no racing man, but judgment is generally based upon facts," replied the Secretary.

"Your Excellency, your money will be safe. My mare will win. She knows ice trotting," said Red Rory quietly. "She has the speed and the temper and the brains. The Black Duke is a great horse, but he has no brain and his temper is uncertain."

The Governor, who was a keen horseman, was much interested.

"Brain? What do you mean?"

"An intelligent horse either plans his own race or he trusts entirely to his driver. A stupid horse just dashes in blindly."

"And your mare?"

"She is intelligent, and she trusts me entirely. She will give me all she has."

"And what of temper?"

"Bad temper exhausts a horse, just as it does a man. Take a bad-tempered horse back a dozen times to the scratch and he will fret himself so that he can't possibly do his best. I can take my mare back two dozen times and she will remain as sweet and cool as possible. She never fusses. She trusts me."

The Governor stood observing him carefully. "That sounds like good judgment, eh, General? I must see the race to-morrow. Will you not join our party?"

"With great pleasure, Governor. It promises some sport."

"You will lose your money, sir, trust me," said Ryland, with a scornful sniff.

"Just what I shall not do this time," said the Governor.

"The young man seems to have sound philosophy of horse-racing. Young man, you ask the General a good

deal to let these men off for an afternoon from this very important work."

"Two hours only, your Excellency,"

"Two hours?" laughed the Governor. "The cabarets will see about that."

"Two hours only, your Excellency. The gang which turns up after two hours' interval a single man short works an extra two hours for nothing."

"Forceful chap, apparently," said the Governor, as they turned away.

"Impertinent, bumptious half-caste, I would call him," growled his Secretary.

"A most useful man I shall find him, I fancy," said the General.

The hour for dinner was a busy hour for Red Rory. His men he had to see properly housed and fed in a large vacant warehouse, and after dinner marched back to work within the hour. Then there was Vitesse also who expected and demanded a visit and certain demonstrations of affection if she were to enjoy and digest her food. In the midst of these demonstrations Alain McNab appeared.

"You sent for me, Rory," he said.

"I did. How are the studies getting on, Alain?"

"They are nothing. Mostly religion and rhetoric."

"Both excellent in their place. How would you like to keep my records for a hundred and fifty men at a fair salary and be my errand boy?"

The boy's dark eyes glittered. "I would come to you, Roree, tout de suite if my Uncle André would permit. But he is—what you say—enamoured of the school and the rhetoric."

"Look here, Alain, you must learn to speak better English. Never speak French to me. And when you have opportunity listen to good English speaking. You must read also English books. You have French enough now. And as for the rhetoric, better give your time to English reading and mathematics. You will need these

more than rhetoric. The French Canadian student has too much rhetoric as it is."

"But I am French Canadian," cried Alain, his black eyes aglow.

"You are also a McNab, and don't forget that. The McNabs are a great people. They don't talk too much, but when you want a man to do things a McNab can be depended upon. You remember that."

"All right, Roree, but——"

"'Rory,' not 'Roree.' Speak English. Get the accent right in English as in French," said Red Rory sharply.

"All right, Rory."

"Better. Now I will see your Uncle André. He is French, mostly French, and only French, but he is a fine chap and my friend."

"And me too, Roree—Rory," said Alain, a dog-like adoration in his eyes. "You pulled me out of the Fleuve one day."

"That's all right," said Red Rory curtly. "And I want you to-morrow to be with me on the race-course. There will be a lot of things to look after. Vitesse to blanket and rub down and a tally to keep of my Malbaie and Baie St. Paul men. They have only two hours off from work and they must be back in time. I will tell you more to-morrow. You will eat with the men and sleep with me."

As Alain was expressing his delight in English prose and in French rhetoric, rather to Red Rory's disgust, there was a flourish of bells and a shout for Rory at the stable door.

"See who that is, Alain. I am busy."

"Hey, young man! Is Rory about anywhere? Tell him Fitz-Gibbon wishes to speak to him."

"Hello there, Alain! Come here! Never mind him! Come here at once. Don't you hear me speaking?"

Cap in hand, Alain ran to greet Miss Christine Nairne, with whom he was a prime favourite.

"See! Here is your sister, Josette, whom you have most dreadfully neglected for days. Come and kiss her. And two lovely young ladies whose eyes proclaim their joy in beholding such a handsome young Apollo as you. Yes! You may shake hands with them. Mademoiselle Louise Vallières and Miss Madeleine Van Rancken." Alain's bow would have graced a Paris salon. "And now you can run and get Red Rory for us."

"What a lovely boy!" exclaimed Madeleine. "Your brother, Josette? Of course! he looks like you."

"Yes. He is at college here. But I fear not much of a student. He is a mere boy, seventeen."

"Adorable! And just my age," murmured Mademoiselle Madeleine.

"Tut, tut! No nonsense! He is very inflammable, I tell you, Madeleine. Besides, he is in love with me," warned Miss Christine.

"I want him so much!" wailed Madeleine, *sotto voce*.

"Harpy! How many more do you want?" groaned Fitz-Gibbon, who was driving the Vallières pair.

"Oh, Rory!" cried Miss Christine. "About the race to-morrow. I suppose we shall not be able to see you at all."

"I shall see only Vitesse," answered Rory, smiling and with a swift glance at the flushed and lovely face in the back seat.

"And how is Vitesse? No worse of her terrible journey? And may I see her?" said Madeleine eagerly.

"You may. Alain will take you."

The girl sprang from the sleigh and ran in with Alain to make her visit.

"Rory, there is trouble," said Miss Christine in a low hurried voice. "I am afraid of what may happen. You know the trouble in the House, about the Judges? And that the Governor—poor dear, he is so ill—was furious and prorogued the House, and quite right too. Well, to-day—have you seen 'Le Canadien'? No! Vile sheet! I only read it to see how low men will fall!

To-day there are the speeches of that creature Bédard and that horrid Boudarges, the most violent and abusive speeches, and a most scandalous editorial practically calling upon the people to revolt."

"Revolt? Hardly, Miss Christine," remonstrated Rory.

"But most certainly. Am I not right, Mr. Fitz-Gibbon?"

"Well, to oppose."

"Oppose? Well, what is the difference? Oppose, revolt—words may differ—the thing is the same. Don't interrupt me, Rory. Well, there it is in black and white. And the Governor is quite determined that he will not tolerate any treasonable writings in 'Le Canadien' or in any other paper in the Province. So there may be trouble in the streets to-day or to-morrow on the ice, especially if the Canadians lose their money."

"They won't lose their money. They will win," said Rory confidently. "And if they are rightly handled they won't fight."

"Oh, that is just the trouble. That Secretary of the Governor is such a narrow and bigoted and bitter man. He wants the soldiers called out."

"There might be trouble then. Perhaps. But why tell me about this?"

"Well, I was thinking you might do something or—see somebody—and Madeleine was afraid—here she comes, and what cheeks. Madeleine was afraid that Vitesse or possibly Vitesse's master might get hurt."

"Not afraid," said Madeleine shyly, glancing up at Red Rory. "But I didn't want her to be hurt, nor her master either, and I thought you ought to know." The flush had deepened on her cheek before she had finished.

"Oh, thank you," said Red Rory with a gay laugh. "But neither Vitesse nor her master will be hurt to-morrow, never fear."

"Hurt?" exclaimed Alain. "Hurt? Who would hurt Vitesse? Or her master? There will be a hundred

Malbaie men on the ice. Oh, la la! Hurt!" Alain's laugh pealed out scornfully.

"But, Rory. It is better you should know it and you will be careful," interposed Josette, whose voice was very anxious. "And you will keep this wild boy quiet."

"Alain? He will be quiet, if he is told, eh, Alain?"

The boy grinned. "But of course. It is to laugh—I mean——" He checked himself in his French English. "It would be a joke if anyone would propose to hurt Vitesse or Red Rory."

"And, Rory! Oh," exclaimed Madeleine, "I almost forgot why I—why we came down. My brother, Max, has come. And he has a most beautiful little cutter, which we would like you to use instead of your heavy carriage." Her lovely face was eager, her blue eyes alight. "You will use it?"

Red Rory's eyes were resolutely turned away from her.

"It is very kind of you, Miss Madeleine, but I have a new and very light carriage built for the purpose." He threw a swift glance at her, caught the disappointment in her face. "But all the same I am more than grateful, and I will tell Vitesse too. We are having a turn to-night over the course when the moon is bright."

"To-night?" cried all four ladies together, and then in silence waited. Red Rory nodded.

"The horrid creature! He does not invite us to see the trial," exclaimed Miss Christine.

"Sure, isn't it a free country?" said Fitz-Gibbon.

"And I want to go so much," said Madeleine.

"You can't win him with sighs," said Miss Christine. "He is stubborn as a mule."

Red Rory grinned at her pleasantly.

"No, but to-night I want no distraction from Vitesse. I must have her all to myself. She must get used to the new sleigh." He laughed aloud. "It is a funny-looking sleigh. Two runners and a box. But they are steel

runners and polished like silver. Oh, she will like it, but I must explain it all to her. Sleigh, harness and mare will be French Canadian."

"And driver too," said Louise Vallières.

"Mos' certainlee. Most certainly," exclaimed Alain. "French Canadian."

"Tut, tut, what about 'Fraser'? Scottish Canadian, say I." Miss Christine was quite impatient over Alain's claim.

"Canadian will do," said Red Rory. "We are all Canadians."

"And you will not invite us to the trials to-night," said Madeleine with an adorable pout.

"Not to-night. But it is a free country, as Mr. Fitz-Gibbon says," replied Red Rory.

"We may turn up to-night, who can tell?" said Fitz-Gibbon.

"Not me," said Madeleine. "I would not distract—anyone."

"Not me," said Josette. "I would not disturb Vitesse."

"Not me," said Louise. "And for the same reason."

"Thank you, Miss Louise," said Red Rory, "and thank you all, ladies." Taking his cap from his head he made them a deep bow. "You are true sports. The race, of course, is everything."

"Shall we drive on, Louise?" said Miss Christine. "This man is quite heartless. Well, Rory, we shall still pray for you and for Vitesse—especially for Vitesse."

"Thank you, Miss Christine, for myself and for Vitesse. She is now sure to win." Again he swept them a bow as the carriage drove off.

"He thinks only of his Vitesse," said Miss Christine.

"But of course," said Miss Louise. "It is Vitesse that carries our monnaie, n'est-ce pas?"

"And her driver," added Miss Madeleine.

"Very much her driver," said Miss Christine. "The wretch!"

CHAPTER VI

"GOOD morning, Cousin Simon. You are early down."

"One must be early these days to catch any trade. But what do you want? More credit?"

"Yes, till the first pay-day, two weeks off. But I know you will trust me."

"But not your habitant customers, Rory. They are spending their money in every cabaret like water. There will be none left for my bills."

"I will speak to them, Cousin Simon. But meantime I have another matter for you. I want you to handle Pierre Bédard's bets this afternoon."

"Bédard's bets? Not his nor any other man's bets. I am not holding with any betting. I am a God-fearing man. But why cannot Bédard look after his own bets?"

"Well, Bédard may not appear. You know the House has just been prorogued. And if Bédard appears on the ice there may be trouble. I am trying to keep him off. But I fear I shan't be able. So if there is trouble I want to be able to announce that his bets may be paid in to his agent at your store."

"I am not taking anything to do with these things. I am a plain business man, attending to my merchandising, which in these hard times——"

"It won't do, Cousin Simon. I passed by your store last night and saw the crowd of your customers here and heard them too. No, I'm not saying you were sympathizing with them, but the habitants tell you all their troubles."

"Whisht now, Rory," said Simon Fraser, glancing out into the street. "It iss myself that knows nothing about these things. And as for Pierre Bédard, he iss a hot-headed radical, a wild one, and that he iss, and——" Simon's speech reflected the excited state of his feelings.

"Well, never mind that, Cousin Simon. It is about

the race I am talking to you. You know it is my mare, Vitesse, that is trotting, and it was M. Bédard that really brought it on with Colonel Gregory."

"Yess, yess, I know, and a very clever man he iss too, but——"

"Anyway, M. Bédard has taken on a lot of bets from the officers and the Americans and all the English crowd, and if he gets into trouble, I want simply to announce to-day at the race that M. Bédard's agent will be at your store this afternoon to settle all accounts."

"At my store? Man alive! What are you saying?"

"Here is his book. All you will need to do will be to check the amounts as they are paid in——"

"Paid in? And what about the amounts to be paid out?"

"There won't be any, Cousin Simon. My mare will win."

"And how do you know that, my man?"

"Well, Cousin Simon, do you think I know a horse when I see one?"

"None better, whateffer!"

"I have seen the Black Duke on the ice often. I have watched him. He is a grand horse, but Vitesse will have no difficulty with him. I know what I am saying."

"You are sure?" asked Simon cautiously.

"Dead certain sure! If you want to make——"

"Whisht now, Rory, do you think I would, an elder in the kirk? Are ye richt sure the mare will win?"

"Didn't you hear me say?"

"Well well. I was hearin' the lads, Kenneth and Sandy, talkin'. But it iss a wild way of doing things. And you are sure, Rory?"

"If she goes in she'll win. But here is the book. All you will need to do is to check up——"

"Me iss it? Check up? Yon man's bets? Me? Well, well, leave the book. My book-keeper will see to it. But you are quite sure——"

"Thank you, Cousin Simon. I shall be needing some

more beans and peas, and pork as well. Those Malbaie men of mine are like wolves. It was a mistake to offer to feed them."

"Aw, well, they will be earning their money if you are bossing them, I doubt. But what? Away so soon? What time is yon race?"

"At half after two. My men are off for two hours."

"Yon Malbaie loons? Man, Rory, you are a foolish man. Keep you your Malbaie men out of that stramash. Let me tell you there will be doings. Keep them away, man!"

"What do you mean, Simon? Have you heard anything?"

"No, I am not saying what I have heard. But I am telling you, keep yon wild men away from the ice. The habitants are wild, and,"—here Simon glanced out of the window cautiously again—"and hard to me, Sir James means to have the soldiers out."

"The soldiers!" exclaimed Rory as the door opened.

"Whisht," he whispered. Then in a louder voice: "Ay, the soldiers will begin their daily exercise soon again. Ah, good morning, Mr. Boisseau. You are early afoot this cold morning."

"Good-bye, then, Cousin Simon," said Rory.

"Well, good-bye, Rory. The beans iss it and the peas and the pork as well. And will there be anything else? No? Well, I will be attending to—to—every—to your orders."

Rory was off at a run. His men met him with searching looks as they went at their work. There was no singing and little joking, but a good deal of quiet undertone talking going on. Young Alain met Rory with his full roster of men and with the necessary requisitions for supplies. The boy was obviously in the grip of deep emotion. He fumbled with his papers and was muddled in his additions. After he had finished with his report he blurted out abruptly:

"They say there will be trouble on the streets to-day."

"Oh, who are 'they'?"

"Everybody. I heard it last night among our men here and—and at the college too. There was a meeting of the students."

"And what was done at the meeting of those politicians?"

"It is not to laugh——" began Alain.

"Tut, tut, habitant!" said Rory with a smile. "Talk English to me."

"Pardon! I mean it is a serious matter. Think of it. The House dismissed just because——"

"Now, Alain, unless you can think more clearly and keep your head cool, I won't waste time with you. You listen to one side and go off at half-cock. I am ashamed of you. Now, do you want to hear the right of this or do you think you know all about it?"

"I know——" began Alain hotly.

"All right, if you know. Shut up. You need not tell me, for I know all about it. But now listen to my orders for to-day. These men, at noon, march off to dinner and march back here at one o'clock. They march down to the ice at half-past two. They are to line the course and keep it clear. After the race they are to form up and march straight back to work here at half-past four. And no nonsense, no fighting, no quarrelling. And you are my deputy and you must keep your head, Alain. No matter what comes, your duty is with the men here. Do you understand? And do you give me your word?"

Half sullenly Alain gave his word and went about his work. Rory called him back.

"Alain boy," he said kindly, "you must be a man to-day. A man after your father's type and mine. Remember, we are of the Fraser Highlanders. There is no rebel blood in us."

"What of the 'Forty-five'?" Alain shot back swiftly.

"The 'Forty-five'? Lad, we were fighting for our King. We had never sworn to any other. And, lad, the soldiers may be out to-day. Remember, they are Brock's

men, not militia rabble. They are my father's comrades and they are mine, and they stand for our King. We stand for our rights, but remember we are no rebels." He put his hand on the boy's shoulder. "You understand?"

The boy shook his head miserably.

"Well, boy, you must trust me then. Will you?"

The boy turned his dark eyes upon Red Rory.

"Mais oui!" he said. "I will trust you, Roree Rouge," and hurried away.

As Red Rory went about among the workmen he was greeted everywhere with inquiries about Vitesse and with cheery assurances of her success. As the noon hour drew near he called his captains, André McNab, Polydore Hammel and Théophile Gagnon, to him.

"You will keep your men together to-day. No cabarets, no flasks. There may be trouble on the ice, especially when Vitesse wins. People hate to lose money. Our English and American friends, too, hate to lose a race. You will police the course very quietly, of course. No noise. And after the race you will march your men through the crowd right back to your work. And remember, no fighting. Polydore, you will sing 'Malbrouck,' eh?"

"Eh, bien!" said Polydore with a grin.

"The good name of Malbaie is in your keeping. These Quebec canaille will be full of whisky blanc and foolishness. You are not like them."

"But of course," said Théophile. "Also Baie St. Paul."

"Of course, Théophile, Baie St. Paul," said Red Rory.

"I look to you to-day."

"But I hear the soldiers are to be out," said Polydore doubtfully.

"Maybe, Polydore, but the soldiers are our friends to-day. You understand?"

"Of course, of course. That is what I say," said Polydore.

As Red Rory went down through the Lower Town he found the streets crowded with excited men. In Ferland Street, where stood the office of "Le Canadien," a dense but silent crowd had gathered.

As he was quietly pushing his way through, he felt a hand within his arm. Turning his head he found Colonel Gregory at his elbow wearing a portentous frown.

"I say, Colonel, don't look like that," he muttered. "Look at those faces. For God's sake laugh!"

The Colonel quickly responded. "Ha ha, old cock!" he shouted. "How is the mare?"

"Ah, my dear Colonel, the mare is only waiting her chance to win all your money." Red Rory's laugh rang high and clear over the crowd.

"She is welcome to it, if she wins," replied the Colonel gaily. "If you win I'll stand you a dinner as well."

"No, no, Colonel! To-night Miles Prentice will spread his very best dinner for you and a dozen of your best friends as my guests."

"Very good. We will shake on that," cried the Colonel. "Come and let us look at the little girl."

A cheer swept the crowd as the two went off arm in arm. The volatile habitants flung off their sullen mood and, yielding to the impulses of their sporting nature, dispersed in gay good-humour discussing the prospects of a glorious victory for the French Canadian over the English trotter.

"There is an ugly spirit in the town, my boy," said the Colonel. "I don't half like it. And I am none too cheerful over this race to-day. Most unfortunate it should have come at this time. Of course you know that the Governor has prorogued the House. And quite right too. But the people are ugly. And if that damned hot-headed Bédard appears, there may be a riot."

"I am afraid you and I wouldn't quite agree on this question, Colonel."

"By Jove! I quite forgot. Thought you were one of

us, you know. But I say, you know, that Bédard, eh, what? Damned traitor, eh?"

"No, Colonel. He doesn't agree with the Governor on the matter of Judges sitting in the House. Nor do I as a matter of fact. A Judge should be above and separate from all political parties. But, after all, Bédard is no traitor, no more am I."

"But, dammit, did you read the rag? Called on the people to oppose the Governor, by Jove, and——"

"Colonel, you know I am no rebel!"

"Rebel? Fraser? Malbaie Fraser? Fraser Highlander and that sort of thing? Rebel? My dear fellow!"

"Thank you, Colonel. Yet I think the Governor is wrong in this. But here we are and we will have a look at the lady. No! I won't take her out."

Red Rory whipped off the blanket. The Colonel walked round the mare in silence, passing his hands over her satin skin, feeling her clean flat legs and slender fetlocks, her strong-muscled withers, her powerful shoulders.

"By Jove! Fraser, she is perfect! Not a line out! She is heavier thewed than I had thought, eh? And that eye! Look at the light in it. And yet so quiet. Brains and sweet temper. Egad, sir, I must hedge a bit, a couple of anchors to windward, eh? Must see about that. She ought to win. Damnation, Fraser, she ought to win!"

The Colonel hurried away to his lunch and to see what could be done in the way of cover.

Long before the hour set for the race, Quebec was on the move for the ice-course. The keen frost of early morning had yielded somewhat to the genial effects of a brilliant sun. Lining the mile course on either side the inhabitants of the city and the surrounding parishes stood several tiers deep upon the frozen Fleuve.

At the finishing post a place had been reserved for the Governor and his suite, with whom stood General Brock, together with the great Seigneurs and their ladies. To-

day, Sir James Craig seemed to be in better health and spirits. The old soldier having flung his gage to his enemies appeared to fling with it much of the heavy load of care and weakness that had made life a weariness to him for months past. Close beside the Governor's sleigh on horseback his Secretary, Ryland, was in attendance, his hard bitter face reflecting nothing of the gay and joyous spirit that pervaded the Governor's party. Among the gentry surrounding the viceregal party none made a more splendid appearance than the equipage of the Vallières. The ladies of the party, Mademoiselle Louise Vallières and her friends, Miss Christine Nairne and Miss Madeleine Van Rancken, were resplendent in their minks, foxes, beavers. Beside them in his new American cutter sat Miss Van Rancken's brother, Max, driving a magnificent grey, and at his side the vivacious face of Josette McNab gleamed like a pearl in its setting of fur ruff and jaunty toque of silver fox, the gift of Red Rory Fraser on his return from his last year's hunting. At her side in attendance rode Lieutenant Fitz-Gibbon, General Brock's aide-de-camp.

As the last stroke from the great bell of the Basilica rang out over the town, the Governor's carriage swept out upon the mile-long course of gleaming ice. There followed the General's sleigh, next in their proper order the sleighs of the Seigneurs and the gentry, and after them those of the citizens, great and small. At the tail of the gorgeous procession came, from the parishes, home-made berlots and carriages, and at the very end a dog team hitched to a luxuriously appointed *traineau*, driven by a Hudson's Bay trapper in all his glory. Down the course marked out by "sapins" and back again amid the cheering throngs the procession moved at a moderate pace.

A single turn round the course by the gay throng of sightseers and the ice was cleared for the event of the day. As the Black Duke stepped out of his blankets on to the course a great burst of hurrahs from his admirers and backers among the English proclaimed his popularity and

their confidence. But when the French Canadian mare on tip-toe danced out daintily after the black stallion, a yell, sudden, fierce, shrill and high-pitched, broke from a thousand throats.

"Vitesse ! Vitesse ! Vive la Vitesse !"

At the fierce yell the black stallion reared high in air and began a series of plunges that threatened to upset his cutter. The little mare after one cat-like spring, at one single "Whoa, Vitesse," from her driver stood stock still, but quivering, her ears back flat to her head as if taking in her driver's words, reproving, remonstrating, laughing at her. Then at command she stepped gaily on again, utterly indifferent to the cheers and yells of the multitude.

"Did you notice that little mare, General?" said Sir James. "Brains and temper, eh?"

As they moved on down the course the cheers turned to good-humoured laughter. And no wonder. The contraption to which Vitesse was attached was enough to excite laughter, the most hilarious. Two steel-shod runners of two-inch hickory, stayed with cross-pieces of the same tough wood with a seat of thin elm boards attached, all bolted securely together but without a touch of paint or rag of upholstering. A weird structure like nothing ever before made by the hand of man, but light, strong and well-nigh impossible to upset. Pursued but utterly unmoved by the laughter, Red Rory followed down the course in the wake of the plunging black, conversing with his mare in cheery laughing tones to which the quick ears and tossing head seemed to make cheery response. The relation between driver and mare was obviously one of complete sympathy and confidence.

The start was apparently difficult to achieve. Two rules had to be observed. No light must show between the horses at the line, and the line must be crossed at a trot. A break into a gallop at the crossing of the line demanded a new trial. Again and again Red Rory allowed the black to take the lead, but whenever the

Black Duke heard the mare come up roaring behind him, he seemed to lose his head and break into a gallop, and at every trial he appeared to become more and more excited and uncontrollable.

"Let me take the lead, Fielding, for the start. My mare won't mind your coming up on her."

"All right, Fraser. Try it. This damned crazy fool, I can't hold him down."

The first attempt of the new procedure was successful and they were away. Vitesse in the lead by half a length and the Black Duke roaring behind her and cutting down her lead at every stride.

At the end of the first quarter the black was neck and neck with the mare and well within his speed. Near the half-way post Fielding let him have his head and immediately he swept to the front, half a length ahead. But the mare paid no heed to this bid, seemingly quite unruffled by the change in position. From the English faction a great shout went up.

"The Black Duke wins! Hurrah!"

A great silence fell upon the Canadians.

"He's winning! Oh, he is winning," groaned Miss Madeleine.

"Nonsense!" said Miss Christine with a laugh. "Look at her head."

Sure enough. The mare's head was high in air and she was reaching for the bit. At the three-quarter post the Black Duke was a full length in front and going with steady powerful strides. A stillness fell upon the crowd, and through the stillness came the voice of Red Rory, quiet, clear.

"Vitesse! En avant! Now, ma petite!"

A gay little toss, the beautiful head dropped a few inches, and with no apparent effort the mare moved up with never a break or hitch, to the flank, to the head, and there held a moment.

"Come along, old boy!" shouted Fielding with a little flick of his long whip point. It was a fatal touch. The

stallion lost his nerve, broke into a gallop, and before he could recover his stride Vitesse had swept on joyously to victory.

Once more that fierce, wild, French Canadian yell pierced the multitudinous noises that rose from the crowds that thronged tumultuously about the horses to congratulate and commiserate the drivers.

"Keep back, men. Don't fuss my mare," cried Red Rory laughingly as he threw off the hands reaching for him, and made for the Black Duke's driver.

"A great race, Fielding! Pity he lost his feet at the last."

"Great race indeed," said Fielding, offering his hand.

"And a great little mare of yours, Fraser. Yes, I am sorry he didn't stick it out. He was going strong."

"He is a magnificent horse and he goes better with a lead. If you like I'll lead off next race."

"You are right. He can't stand a horse coming up on him. He loses his nerve."

Meantime the Governor had sent for Red Rory.

"Ha! You are right, young man. Brains and good temper, eh!" exclaimed Sir James in high good-humour.

"She knows me and she trusts me. We rely on each other. It is the only way to get the best out of any combination, sir," replied Red Rory.

"Ha! What? Yes. If you can rely upon——? Ha! What are they shouting, Ryland? Who are those people?"

Through the fierce and exultant cheering of the French Canadians there could be heard the rhythmic beat of a cry. "Where is Bédard? Where is Bédard?"

"It is the students from the Seminary. Young fools!" said Ryland angrily. "They are calling for Bédard, your Excellency. Insolent rascals!"

The students were gradually making their way nearer and nearer to the Governor's party and drawing into their numbers the rabble who were beginning to take up the rhythmic cry, "Where is Bédard?"

"I wish you had ordered a troop of cavalry."

"Cavalry!" laughed Fitz-Gibbon. "And what would you be wanting with the cavalry, Mr. Ryland? Sure those boys will hurt nobody at all."

Red Rory joined in the laugh. "I'll attend to them, Fitz-Gibbon," he said, running off towards the course where Alain was walking Vitesse up and down under blankets.

"Get back, boys," cried Red Rory. "You are exciting my mare."

"Where is Bédard?" cried a young student, tall, handsome and with a truly noble cast of face.

"Well, he is not here," said Red Rory. "And you keep back your crowd, Papineau. My mare needs a quiet little rest. Eh?"

"Where is Bédard?" shouted the youth, backed by the frantic cheers of his comrades.

"I tell you I haven't got him," said Red Rory. "So get back. What? You won't? We'll see." He sprang up on his cutter and cried out, waving his hand: "Malbaie! Malbaie! A moi!"

A roar, deep and threatening, answered his cry. Thrusting through the crowd, hurling men asunder, came Polydore Hammel crying, "Malbaie! Malbaie!" On all sides came the response. "Malbaie! Malbaie!" In less than three minutes some fifty men were about Red Rory.

"What is it, Rory?" shouted Polydore.

"Oh, nothing much," replied Red Rory with a gay laugh. "Vitesse needs a little room to walk about and these young men are a little too insistent in their admiration. Room I want." He swept his hand towards the crowding, shouting students.

"Eh bien!" exclaimed Polydore. With a swift movement he advanced upon the students.

"Go back!" he roared, waving his arms as if to a flock of geese.

The students laughed at him. But not long. Seizing

the nearest of them, Polydore with a mighty heave swung him as he might a heavy hammer and hurled him clean over the heads of his companions far into the crowd.

"Polydore!" cried Red Rory, again laughing aloud. "Doucement! Doucement! Mon vieux!"

"Mais certainement!" roared Polydore pleasantly, snatching another student and treating him as he had the first. In a very few moments, before the onset of the Malbaie men the student formation was scattered like leaves before a wind. The chanting cries for M. Bédard were no longer heard, and after a few minutes' rest the second heat of the race was called. Red Rory looked at his watch. He had forty-five minutes to win the race and get his men back to the fortifications. Plenty of time.

"Polydore!"

The giant came trotting to him.

"Immediately after the race get your men away. A little song, and quick march, eh?"

"Eh bien! Tout de suite, mon Capitaine," said Polydore, his great hands caressing Vitesse. "Ma belle allouette! Ma belle petite," he murmured.

"Allons! Marche donc, Vitesse! C'est fini," said Red Rory with a gay laugh. He laughed too soon. He had not counted upon the proverbial hazards of a horse-race. In the second heat, as Vitesse, a length in the lead, for Red Rory was taking no chances, was skimming the ice like a swallow with the Black Duke roaring hard behind her and the French Canadian crowd frantically waving and cheering, at the three-quarter post a man stepped from the side line yelling madly and flung his capuchon high in air. The capuchon fell just in front of the mare's flying feet. A desperate leap in air, a plunge, a slide into the bank of snow on the side, a recovery, a gallant but vain attempt to regain her lost place and she crossed the line nose to tail of the stallion, but leaving a trail of red blood behind her.

A yell savage as the cry of a wild beast broke from the crowd. Théophile Gagnon had the man by the throat, worrying him from side to side as a dog might a rat. About him, maddened men cried hoarsely: "An English plot! Kill him!" with scores of fingers reaching for him.

Meantime Freddy Fielding had run to Red Rory, swearing deeply and shouting:

"It's no race, Rory. No race! I won't have it! It's a damn shame! Is she hurt much?"

"No, only a cut in her heel! But, Fielding, for God's sake look at that crowd. Rescue that man. They will surely kill him. Come on! Alain, look after Vitesse!"

"No, you. Let me go!" cried Alain, struggling in Red Rory's grip.

"No. These are Malbaie men. I know them. Look after Vitesse! Come on, Fielding."

Through the milling, fighting, howling crowd, for the man had his friends, Red Rory and Fielding waded as through waves of an incoming tide.

"Malbaie!" cried Red Rory, as he neared Théophile, in whose grip the man was being choked to death.

"Théophile! Stop that!" He might have spoken to a mad dog. Slipping behind him Red Rory's fingers closed hard on Théophile's windpipe, his thumbs behind his ears. With a strangling cry Théophile dropped his victim, strongly redolent of whisky blanc, into Freddy Fielding's rescuing arms.

"The man was drunk, Fraser. That explains it. There was no plot," said Fielding.

"Of course not. Take him along to some safe place," said Red Rory. "I must see to Vitesse."

He found a greatly excited crowd surging about the mare. The Governor had sent Ryland to inquire.

"How is the mare? Badly?" inquired Ryland.

Red Rory, busy with a bandage, ignored him.

"His Excellency is inquiring if your mare is injured," repeated Ryland.

"Oh, will you thank His Excellency and tell him the cut is not serious," said Red Rory, without looking up from his work.

At this point Freddy Fielding came up. "Fraser, come with me to the judges. The blasted idiots!" An eager group of Freddy's friends were following him.

"What's the matter with the judges?"

"They are calling that a heat!"

"It was a heat, Fielding. My mare stumbled. Not her fault, nor mine, nor yours, nor the judges'. A drunken fool did it. A dog might have done it. No. It is a heat, and in ten minutes we will have the last heat and let the better horse win."

"But look here, Fraser. Are you sure your mare is fit? Why not postpone this heat for a week?"

"Thanks, Fielding. She is fit as she will ever be."

"All right. I think the Black Duke can beat her, but I want no unfair advantages."

"No, you would not. But get that out of your mind. It is only a superficial cut. Vitesse is perfectly fit to give her best. If you win it will be because you deserve to win. But of course you won't."

"I'm going to win, Fraser."

Wild cheers and counter-cheers greeted both declarations.

There was a note of fierceness in the cheering. This was no gay holiday crowd lining the course and packing the Beaufort road and the bank of the Fleuve. The undernote of anger was there, deep and threatening.

"I don't like the look of that rabble," said Ryland to the Governor. "And I don't like the tone of their voices."

"I don't know their lingo," replied Fitz-Gibbon with a laugh, "and so I can't tell you what they're saying. But sure 'tis a jolly-lookin' crowd they are to me."

"Look at them! Look at those students! Listen to that young cub haranguing them there. He is talking treason, I'll be bound," growled Ryland.

The names "Bédard," "Taschereau," "Blanchette," could be heard.

"If the English horse wins there will inevitably be a riot," said Ryland. "I wish to God we had a troop of cavalry here."

"Tut, tut, Ryland. Talk sense," said the Governor impatiently. "The people are perfectly good-natured, very jolly indeed. This will be a great race. Ah, Miss Nairne, where does your money lie?"

"Am I not of Malbaie? We are all for Vitesse in this company, your Excellency, I fear."

"Why fear? Vitesse—that is the mare's name?—Yes! Well, Vitesse it is that carries my money."

"Or her driver, your Excellency? He, too, is Malbaie," said Miss Christine, smiling into the Governor's face.

"Vitesse and her driver," came the soft voice of Josette deep in her furs by the side of Max Van Rancken.

"Ah, the young lady has the word," said the Governor with a gallant bow. "It is the combination that carries my money, eh, General?"

"It is always so, the man and his horse, the General and his command, the Governor and his people," said a deep voice from a magnificent carriage drawn up immediately behind that of the Vallières.

"Ah, Mr. Cuthbert, still here. I am glad to see you interested in a good bit of sport."

"Yes, your Excellency," replied Mr. Cuthbert, Seigneur from Berthier near Montreal and an influential member of the Legislative Council. "Always interested in sport so that it be carried on fair and square as it is here."

"They're away!" cried Fitz-Gibbon, his glasses on the far end of the course. "And the stallion is leading. He has steadied down a bit."

He was right. The third heat was on; the Black Duke was in the lead with Vitesse's nose at Fielding's shoulder. The high spirit of the stallion had perceptibly sobered, he was moving with beautiful ease and holding his lead with

no apparent effort. Indeed as they neared the beginning of the second quarter he moved away from his rival by a length.

Vitesse did not appear to be enjoying herself. She was impatiently reaching, reaching for the bit.

"She's not going well," said Miss Christine impatiently.

"It's her foot, I guess," said Miss Madeleine. "It was a nasty cut."

"Rory said it didn't matter," said Josette. "She is coming up. Oh, look!"

She was coming up but still reaching for the bit. At the half-mile post she was up on the stallion's tail. A stillness descended upon the crowd along the course. Through the stillness the quiet voice of Red Rory could be heard remonstrating with his mare.

"Doucement, Vitesse, ma petite! Ah, ha ha!" he laughed at her. "Not yet, ma chérie!"

Nearing the three-quarter post Fielding called upon his horse. There was a prompt response and Vitesse was again at Fielding's shoulder.

"Oh, very well, then," called Red Rory to her. "Go if you must."

And immediately she was up on the stallion's flank and three hundred yards to go. Once more Fielding called to his horse, and again the noble animal released a fresh burst of speed, but again the mare was at his shoulder, still reaching for the bit.

"She has got him!" sighed Josette.

"Jerusalem! I don't know," said Max Van Rancken.

"What a horse! What power!"

Two hundred yards.

"Come on, old boy!" Fielding implored, flicking his horse for the first time with the tip of his long whip. And once more the Black Duke made response and shook the mare back to his flank. "He's winning! Jeerrupiter! He's winning!" groaned Max Van Rancken.

"Oh, Roree! Sainte Vierge!" breathed Josette.

As if in answer to her prayer the low clear voice of Red

Rory came in a gay triumphant cry : " Vitesse ! " Back flew the delicate ears. " Volez, ma chérie ! Now go ! "

The beautiful head dropped low into an almost perfect line with the neck, the long barrel seemed to flatten itself towards the ice. In a single second she was at the stallion's shoulder, then at his neck, his head, then in the lead, gaining inch by inch.

In vain Fielding called to his horse, flicking him with his whip. He was giving his last ounce. That flying thing in front of him he simply could not reach. For a few seconds he fought out his game fight, never would he fight a harder. Stay he had and the heart of a lion—but speed—speed to close up that widening gap he had not. He had given his all and in vain. Already she was beyond the winning-post two lengths ahead, with Red Rory's arms round her neck while he poured forth endearing words over her as a lover over his lass.

But only for a moment.

" Take her, Alain," he said, and came running towards his rival.

" Fielding ! A noble horse and nobly driven," he cried aloud, offering his hand.

" Yes ! A great horse ! " said Fielding, his arm over the Black Duke's shoulder. " But yours is better. My horse never went better."

" Vitesse never went as well ! " replied Red Rory. " A great race and great driving, Fielding. You got all he had."

" Yes, old boy ! " said Fielding. " You gave me all you had."

CHAPTER VII

THE result of the great race was immensely popular with the highly excitable citizens of Quebec, who went quite mad in their demonstrations of triumph and joy. In a close ring about Vitesse and her driver gathered the men of Malbaie and Baie St. Paul, slightly less demon-

strative but all the more deeply moved over the glory that had come to their parishes.

The English section, silent in their disappointment, but like true sports taking their medicine, gathered round Colonel Gregory inquiring as to the payment of their bets.

"Where is the demned Frenchman? He is into me for a pony over this," said an English officer. "That little mare is extremely deceivin'. Where is the fella?"

Through the frenzied mass came Colonel Gregory, pushing his way.

"A great race, Fraser," he said. "You were a little too good for us. Where shall we pay our money? I don't see Mr. Bédard about."

"Oh, that reminds me," said Red Rory, and mounting his cutter he held up his hand for silence.

"M. Bédard," he said, "unfortunately is not available, but his agent will be in the store of Mr. Simon Fraser on Sous le Fort Street any time this afternoon."

"A-a-a-h!" A great sigh swept over the people and then clear and high came a student's voice.

"Où est M. Bédard?"

Hundreds of voices took up the cry. "Where is Pierre Bédard?" Gradually the crowd began to mass themselves towards the viceregal party.

"I'm off for the dragoons!" said Ryland.

"Come back, you fool!" cried Fitz-Gibbon.

But Ryland, paying no heed, spurred his horse wildly through the crowd towards the Upper Town.

While Red Rory was busily engaged in rubbing down Vitesse and strapping a blanket about her, a messenger from the Governor came to him.

"His Excellency wishes to speak to you," he said.

"Alain, bandage the mare's legs," he ordered, "and keep her walking up and down here till I come back."

The Governor was jubilant over the victory, and especially at his own prescience in picking the winner. As he was congratulating Red Rory upon his victory and commending the extraordinary combination of brains

and good temper shown in his mare, the milling, thrusting, yelling crowd of French Canadians drew ever nearer the viceregal party and the little group of English-speaking and other sympathizers in close proximity.

The Governor glanced at the crowd. His eyes grew hard.

"General, shall we proceed?" he inquired calmly.

"It might be as well to allow my sleigh to lead the way," suggested the General.

"Your Excellency," said Red Rory, "it would be a great honour to Vitesse if she were allowed to lead the way, and all the more that the men of Malbaie are due at their work on the fortifications within half an hour."

"Vitesse lead? Most assuredly," cried Sir James in a loud voice. "Who has a better right?"

"Malbaie!" Sharp and clear rang Red Rory's voice. "Malbaie! A moi! Voilà votre chemin!" He pointed towards the Upper Town. "Vitesse de front! Allons mes vieux!"

Immediately André McNab sprang to Vitesse's head.

"Polydore! Ici!" he cried.

With a roar as of a bull Polydore Hammel flung himself before Vitesse.

"En avant! Marche donc!" he shouted.

To his side sprang Théophile Gagnon shouting, "Baie St. Paul!"

"Now then, Polydore, une petite chanson!"

Like a blare of a bass horn, full, clear, resonant, rose the voice of Polydore in the old war song, "Malbrouck!"

Before the advancing three the crowd gave way, madly cheering Vitesse and her driver. Immediately behind the mare, the men of Malbaie and Baie St. Paul swung into line. Behind them came the Governor's carriage, followed by those of General Brock, with Fitz-Gibbon in attendance, and of the Seigneurs. In the rear followed the students and the rabble in a disorganized mass, shouting, cheering, but with the cry ever and anon arising high, "Where is Bédard?"

"Well, thank God we have a man with a head on him leading us," said Miss Christine. "I tell you frankly I was shivering in my moccasins a few minutes ago. That is an angry and ugly crowd. A little more and they would have ruined the Governor's carriage."

"What could they do?" asked Miss Madeleine with some scorn.

"Do you see those stones? A crowd of angry habitants and plenty of stones about make a serious combination. They are savages, I assure you. They lose their heads and then there is the devil to pay. No, we are well out of it, and that young cavalier of yours has done it."

A hot flush dyed the cheeks of the girl.

"Cavalier of mine?" she exclaimed indignantly. "What do you mean?"

"Hoity-toity!" said Miss Christine with a gay laugh. "Your habitant admirer is not pretty to look at——"

"Pretty? Bah!"

"But he is a Highlander, remember. And he has extricated his Excellency and all of us from a devilishly unpleasant predicament."

Through the Lower Town, thronged with excited crowds, up the steep streets to the Upper Town, through the Palace Gate the roaring procession made its way. At the Palace Gate there was a check. Down the steep, narrow causeway from the Palace Gate a squadron of cavalry in charge of a young ensign at whose side rode Ryland came clattering down at a swift trot.

"Halt!" ordered the ensign, holding up his sword. His men came to a stand as did the column of singing Malbaie men meeting them.

"Who are you?" demanded the officer as the singing ceased.

"We are workmen proceeding to the fortifications where we are at work," said Red Rory. "We should be obliged if you would allow us to pass. We are anxious not to be late."

"Nonsense!" said Ryland. "Get back the way you came. We cannot be delayed a moment. Come! Get back! The Governor is waiting for us and——"

"The Governor is immediately behind us, sir," said Red Rory to the officer, ignoring Ryland. "If you would allow us to pass beside you."

"Pull aside?" shouted Ryland. "He is an insolent habitant foreman of works in charge of a lot of ruffians——"

"Come!" said the officer impatiently. "The King's soldiers can't be held up like this. About face there and be quick about it."

"Get your horse to one side," shouted Ryland, touching his horse with his spur. The horse plunged heavily, and getting out of control charged into the column of Malbaie men and hurling Théophile Gagnon back upon Vitesse, who, startled, wheeled sharply about and stood sideways across the street.

Red Rory caught Ryland's plunging and kicking horse by the bridle.

"Allow me!" he said.

"Let go my horse!" shouted the furious Ryland.

"Forward!" commanded the officer, touching his horse with the spur. Immediately there was a forward move of the whole troop.

"Wait, please, till I move my horse," cried Red Rory, still holding Ryland's plunging horse.

"Get out of the way!" shouted the officer, pushing his horse into the crowd of men.

"Get her out of this, Alain!" cried Red Rory.

Polydore Hammel threw himself in the way of the advancing troop, snatching at the officer's bridle.

"Would you dare?" shouted the officer.

Immediately there was a *mêlée* of plunging, kicking horses from whose advance the Malbaie men sought to protect Vitesse with their bodies. Through the *mêlée* the whole body of troopers came crashing forward. Over Vitesse plunged a huge horse, trampling and plung-

ing. There was a wild, an unearthly scream of agony. From Red Rory an answering shriek.

"Vitesse!" He threw himself in the way of the crowding horsemen. To his side leaped Polydore and André. Together the three stood, their fingers in the bridle rings, shoving, backing, forcing the rearing horses to one side of the mare lying kicking and struggling on the ground, with Alain holding down her head.

At this point Fitz-Gibbon came hurrying up.

"What is the matter here? Who is blocking the way? Get back your men!" he ordered the officer. "Why? What?" His eyes fell upon Vitesse, by whose side Red Rory was now kneeling.

"Good Lord, Rory!" cried Fitz-Gibbon, flinging himself from his horse. "She is not hurt?" Red Rory lifted a foreleg. It doubled in his hands.

"Oh, my God! Oh, Vitesse!" Red Rory threw himself beside the mare, taking her head in his arms. "Oh, Vitesse," he moaned, "they have killed you. They have killed you!" With her nose pressed hard against his breast the mare lay shuddering. Up through the crowd the Governor's carriage made its way.

"What is this?" inquired Sir James angrily, as he sprang from his carriage and came forward.

"It is Vitesse, sir!" said Fitz-Gibbon. "She has been injured."

"Vitesse! Injured!"

Up came the General. With one swift glance he took in the whole scene.

"Take your men back!" he said sharply to the silent and dismayed officer.

"Broken?" inquired the Governor in a whisper.

"I fear so, sir," said the General. In silence they all stood for some moments gazing upon the pitiful scene.

The General nodded to Fitz-Gibbon and made a motion towards the mare. Fitz-Gibbon drew his pistol from its holster.

"There is only one thing for it, Fraser," he said.

Red Rory glanced up at him with white face. Shuddering he laid his face against the mare's cheek and held her close.

"Ma petite ! Ma petite ! Ma belle Vitesse !"

Upon her velvet nose, upon her delicate ear he pressed a kiss. He took off his coat and threw it over the mare's head, then reached for the pistol.

"Adieu, Vitesse. Good-bye, good-bye !" he whispered. There was a dull explosion, a shudder and the beautiful limbs lay still.

He stood up and gazed stupidly from one face to another.

"Polydore," said Rory quietly, "the men will go on to their work."

Polydore, sobbing like a child, turned with a wave of his arm to his men and marched up through the gate.

Again the General nodded to Fitz-Gibbon.

"I will attend to this for you, old man," said Fitz-Gibbon. "I will get a sleigh."

"Thank you," said Red Rory.

"Fraser, you have my sincere sympathy," said Sir James, offering his hand. "She was a noble beast."

Without a word Red Rory shook hands with the Governor and the General. Silently the Malbaie and Baie St. Paul men marched past to their work.

As he passed down the lines of sleighs, Fitz-Gibbon paused a moment at the Vallières' sleigh and gave them the tragic news.

"Oh, my God, Vitesse ?" cried Miss Christine. "Let me go to him."

"No, no, no. He would not wish it," exclaimed Miss Madeleine, clutching her arm. "He would hate anyone to see."

"She is right, I think," said Fitz-Gibbon.

"Turn about then," said Miss Christine.

Down the hill the Vallières' carriage passed, followed by Max and Josette in wondering silence, leaving Red Rory alone with his dead and Alain in silent misery pacing the causeway.

CHAPTER VIII

MEANTIME throughout the afternoon an informal council of war had been held in General Brock's office in the Château St. Louis.

The arrival of Lieutenant Fitz-Gibbon, who was followed by Secretary Ryland in a high state of excitement and indignation, turned the tide of discussion from the affairs of state to more personal matters.

"Well, you did the business," said the Governor.

"Yes, sir, and a sore business it was too," replied Fitz-Gibbon.

"I can quite believe it," said the Governor. "I have the same affection for my horse 'Alfred.' It is quite a wonderful thing how horses and dogs get into one's heart. I really felt very keenly for that young man."

"Yes, sir. He was practically a wet nurse to that mare—brought her up on a bottle—slept in the stall with her the first winter of her life—trained her in the most delightful tricks. He was very badly cut up about it, and all the more that only for a little stupidity or worse the thing need never have happened. Five minutes' patience would have obviated the whole difficulty."

"They had our horses by the head," snapped Secretary Ryland, who had been restraining himself with the utmost difficulty.

"He had your horse by the head, I understand, because it had got out of your control in a narrow passage crowded with men hurrying up to their work on the fortifications to keep an engagement with His Excellency." Fitz-Gibbon's voice, which was very deliberate, and his tone which was perfectly polite, gave to his statement an edge all the more cutting.

Ryland was furious. "I considered the man's action as a deliberate insult, an interference with an officer engaged in the performance of his duty."

"An officer? Hardly. I understand, sir," said Fitz-

Gibbon with cool firmness, "the whole matter was precipitated by a little unnecessary excitement on the part of a rider who appeared to be quite unable to control his horse. The officer in command may have misunderstood the action of the young man in charge of the band of workmen. But a little patience would have got over all the difficulty."

"The thing was of a piece with the spirit of insubordination shown earlier in the afternoon," asserted the Secretary with heat.

"Tut! Tut! Man, have sense," said Simon Fraser. "Rebellion is the last thing in their minds."

"Quite right, Fraser," said the Governor heartily. "But there is a spirit abroad that I do not like, and between ourselves here that is my reason why I hesitated to agree to the issuing of arms and equipment to the militia at the present time, even to your men, Seigneur Cuthbert."

"And quite right!" growled Ryland. "A lot of damned rebels. They would have killed me."

"Your Excellency," exclaimed Seigneur Cuthbert, rising in his indignation. "I must protest against such words. I pledge you my honour that the men of Berthier are as loyal as I am. And so you will find them ere long."

"Ay, and you will be needing them too if my advices are to be trusted, your Excellency," said Simon Fraser.

"Say you so, Simon? Any new information?"

"Plenty, which I can give you at the proper time," replied Simon Fraser.

"Why not now? We are all loyal men here. Let us have it," said Sir James.

"The President's last utterance, your Excellency, is most hostile. There is great activity in the training of the militia, in the manufacturing of arms, and in the making of cannon. Along our frontier, very ominous movement of troops. I have private advices which I am about to lay before your Excellency. The situation is

too grave to be treated in any casual manner or by irresponsible parties."

"But our information is that there is a very strong party against war with Canada, Mr. Fraser," said a councillor.

"Yes, there is. The Federalists who are bitterly opposed to war are strong in New England and fairly so in New York, but the West and South are Republican or Democratic or War-hawk or whatever you like to call them and as a matter of politics they are crying for war. And war they will have, for they are the party of the Government. We ought to set our house in order instead of squabbling like a lot of silly schoolboys. I am a plain speaker."

"Mr. Fraser, you are a plain speaker. And did I not know you for an honest man I would—I would——"

"Hoots, yer Excellency. Ye have need of a few plain-speaking honest men about you who can tell you the truth about this country and its people. And ye know you cannot frighten me." The keen blue eyes gazed steadily into the fiery face of the Governor.

In spite of his annoyance Sir James broke into laughter. "Simon, Simon, if it were anyone but you, I would put him where he would be safe."

"Ay, and what good would that be doing? Ye have not the accommodation for all of your friends who think like me, let alone your enemies," said the intrepid Scot.

"Nevertheless, I will not tolerate traitors. This Government is not to be intimidated."

"Hear! Hear!" came the general chorus.

"But it is not intimidation one way or the other we will be needing. Only a little common sense and less pettiness and bigotry, and I am not referring to the Governor of this country either."

Ryland, in a rage, rose and opened wide the door leading to the outside gallery. Up from the city came the sounds of confused shouting and uproar.

"That is your answer, Mr. Fraser," he said grimly.

"Hoots, man, do not be a silly gowk," said Fraser.
 "A parcel of excited students seeking a little fun."

"Yes. Students from the Seminary. Where do they get their politics? And their inspiration?"

Simon Fraser rose to his feet.

"Your Excellency will permit me to retire," he said in a voice of cold rage. "It is just such bigotry that makes Government in this country difficult."

"You spoke a true word there, Mr. Fraser," said the Seigneur Cuthbert. "That is the conviction of many of the Governor's most loyal supporters."

"An *imperium in imperio* is the ruin of Government in any country and in any age," said Ryland bitterly.

"You will excuse me, your Excellency. I must be looking after my windows."

"Ha! So?"

"Yes, yes, indeed," replied Simon with a grim laugh. "A window has a great fascination for a lad with a stone in his hand. It is chiefly the fun of it he is after. But I will be getting Red Rory and his men from Malbaie to shoo them away."

"Ay, more likely to be leading them on!" muttered Ryland.

"Ye are a slandering leear, saving yer Excellency's presence," said Simon coolly. "And I will be bidding you good night, sir, and gentlemen." With an elaborate bow to the Governor, the General and to the other gentlemen present, the wrathful Scot made his exit.

Sir James smiled wearily.

"A bitter tongue," he said. "But an honest heart. All the same, General, I feel like investigating that tumult myself."

"My dear Sir James, you have had a hard day and you are very tired. If you so desire I will make investigation. But I have no doubt the police can deal with the trouble."

Sir James went to the open door and listened intently.

There was a low growling roar rising from the Lower Town, with occasional bursts of cheering.

"I am rather done up, General, I must confess. My doctor here, I know, will be quite furious with me. If you would be so good."

"Certainly, sir," said Brock, making his adieux, and with Fitz-Gibbon in attendance he passed out of the room, followed in due order by the rest of the company.

"Perhaps I had better go along," suggested Ryland.

"Oh, I hardly think so," said Sir James.

"You will not be needing me to-night, sir?"

"No, no! But there is no necessity for you to go among that excited crowd. All the more because they seem——"

The Governor paused.

"They don't like me, I know," said the Secretary bitterly. "They hate me, but they can't terrify me. I really think I ought to get a first-hand report, sir."

"Oh, very well," said the Governor. "But do not unnecessarily expose yourself."

"Good night, sir. I do hope you will have a good night, sir."

"A good night? My God, when have I had a good night? But it will soon be over."

"I hate to see you suffer, sir. I wish I could help." Ryland was deeply moved.

"I know, Ryland! But only God can help me. Good night." With his hand pressed hard to his side the Governor passed wearily out, leaning heavily on the arm of his friend and medical adviser, Dr. Raeburn.

CHAPTER IX

STRAIGHT to Simon Fraser's store rode Red Rory, his heart in a turmoil.

"The master in?" he asked of the wizened old Scottish bookkeeper behind the desk.

"He's no, but I was to show you this wee buik." Red Rory found the "wee buik" to be M. Bédard's betting book.

"An' here's the money till ye." The bookkeeper's manner was severely disapproving. To him the whole betting business was of the devil. He handed the money over as an unclean thing.

"Oh, thank you, Mr. Airdrie. Why! there is quite a lot of it. Well, he will be having a hard enough time, I rather think."

"Well, he deserves it." Mr. Airdrie's voice was sternly condemnatory. "Settin' fowk against their lawful and God-appointed authority."

"God-appointed, Mr. Airdrie?"

Mr. Airdrie found Red Rory's tolerant smile annoying. "Ye've no been readin' yer Buik awhile back, I doot."

"Ma buik?" Red Rory in perplexity turned over the leaves of the little black book in his hand.

"No yon wee record o' the transactions o' Satan. The Buik o' buiks. Man, have ye no knowledge o' the admonitions o' the Apostle Paul anent Governments and authorities and the like? But count yer money and sign this receipt and then I'm quit o't. Ay, but she's a bonnie wee mare and it was fine to see her gie yon great lumberin' American his paikes. I was real prood o' the wee lass. And ye managed her fine. But I'm no a racin' man." Mr. Airdrie interrupted himself hastily fearing that he might have compromised himself by his admiration of the "bonnie wee mare." "Na, na, I dinna haud wi' it. It's a' a sinfu' carry-on."

"Well, she'll race no more, Mr. Airdrie," said Red Rory gravely.

"Race nae mair? Hoots! I wadna be ower hasty aboot that," exclaimed Mr. Airdrie in dismay. "The bird she is! Ay, she was like a whaup wi' her dip o' a glide, yon last meenute. Ay, yon last meenute! Ma gosh! She was no quadruped at a'. She was a thing o' the air! The wee lassie!"

Then Red Rory told him of the catastrophe that had befallen the mare. Mr. Airdrie was overcome with grief and rage. Principally with rage at the Governor's Secretary.

"The domned gowk ! God forgie me ! It slippit oot ! But yon mannie is a fair gomeril. And the maister has little respeck for him. A weel ! A weel ! Ye'll be sair for the wee birdie."

Mr. Airdrie drew, from a recess in the shelves at his back, a square bottle and two glasses which he proceeded to fill with great care. As Red Rory sipped his drink Mr. Airdrie regarded him over his glass with expectation not unmingled with anxiety. But Red Rory made no response.

"Ye'll no be findin' the like o' that in Malbaie, nor yet in the Château itself forbye," said Mr. Airdrie with a touch of impatience.

"Eh ? What ? Oh !" exclaimed Red Rory, recalled to requirements of decent society. "Of course not, Mr. Airdrie. What is this ? It's rare blend."

"Ay ! Rare it is ! But there's no blend aboot yon. It's"—here Mr. Airdrie's voice was lowered to the reverential tone reserved for things—"a rare sacred Drumforgie." Mr. Airdrie's eye held Red Rory with a stern glare as if to challenge denial.

"Drumforgie ?" echoed Red Rory in a voice of awe.

"Ay ! No less ! He keeps it for himsel', and a very few specials, I'm tellin' ye. The Governor and the General—he has a great admiration for yon man—and his Grace when he comes in to see the lady."

"It is wonderful ! Quite a remarkable flavour."

At the sound of a foot at the door, Mr. Airdrie hastily replaced the bottle and glasses in the receptacle, swiftly passed his guest a handful of cloves from a convenient vessel, took some himself and came forward to greet his master.

"Yer late !" he said with a touch of asperity. "Yer

lady will be waitin' on ye. The lad has gotten yer bettin' money."

"My bettin' money? I will be thanking you not to associate any bettin' money with me, Mr. Airdrie, if you please."

"Well, it came into yer shop at any rate."

"That will do, Mr. Airdrie. I have nothing to do with betting money. So that will be enough upon that subject. What now, Rory? I heard of your loss, lad. You will come up to dinner! Your horse? Mr. Airdrie, see that one of the lads takes Mr. Fraser's horse to the stable and gives it care. At once, please, Mr. Airdrie."

With sundry growlings, Mr. Airdrie proceeded to obey his orders while Simon Fraser carried Red Rory off to dinner.

"What shall I do with this money, Cousin Simon? There is quite a lot of it. I don't want to carry it about. I should like to get it to M. Bédard."

"I will get it to him. He is a hot-headed man. I would not call him a wise man, but he means well. He is like a lad with his first garden. He is always pulling things up to see if they are beginning to grow. He cannot wait. But come along, Rory lad. You have had a hard day and you will be needing your dinner. The Madame will be glad to see you."

It was much against his will that Red Rory yielded to his cousin Simon's insistence.

"Never mind your clothes. A brush will set most of that right. And your face, a little warm water and a bit of plaster here and there and you will be none the worse. Not that you will be much to look at when all is done, but you might have been worse." Thus Cousin Simon built up his assurance.

Mr. Simon Fraser's house was in reality a rear extension of his store, climbing by a series of terraces excavated from a rather abrupt hill-side. A passage led upstairs from the back door of the store to a somewhat imposing entrance hall, whose dark oak walls were decor-

ated with hunting trophies and on whose stone floors lay magnificent skins of bear, wolf, deer and other wild animals from the Canadian forests. The sitting-room opened on to the dining-room with high wainscoting of black walnut, with rich tapestries above extending to a beamed ceiling of bird's-eye maple oiled to a golden yellow. The furniture was largely of walnut and oak, stout, heavy and quaintly carved, evidently the work of some local habitant and beautifully done. In a huge fireplace with walnut mantelpiece blazed great logs of hardwood, on one side of which a door opened to the kitchen. Through a door on the other side a glimpse of what was evidently Madame's boudoir could be seen furnished in the manner of a Paris salon. Glass doors hung with heavy curtains of deep blue opened upon a high-walled garden set out with fruit trees and flowers.

From silver sconces set into the walnut panelling, the soft light of a score of candles filled the room with a mellow radiance and was reflected in gleaming points of light from silver and glass set out upon the dining-table of polished walnut.

This was the home which Simon Fraser had made for his French wife some forty years ago. With the erratic waywardness of love, a gay and popular actress nearing her thirties gave herself body and soul to the rising merchant who had pursued her for ten years with the pertinacity of his race. As mad a love affair it was, as if consummated ten years before—but what have years to do with love?—and a love affair it continued through nearly forty years of stress and struggle of married life. She made him a home that became a rallying centre for those to whom a new book, a gem from the brush of an old master, a scene from an old play, an hour's quiet talk by an open fire, or the sparkle and flash of the dinner-table was as the breath of life.

To Simon Fraser and his actress wife, after years of waiting, a son was born and then a daughter. The son after his preliminary training in the Jesuits' College in

Quebec was sent to a famous school in Edinburgh for his finishing. After two years, however, in that ancient seat of learning, his academic career was abruptly terminated by a letter from the Head.

"We will be trying you among the bales and boxes, my man," said his father to himself after reading the letter. "It will not be so much to your liking but more to your profiting, I will be thinking." And so it proved. He became a keen trader and rose to a position of trust and authority by the time he had finished his twenties, taking full charge of the large and growing department of trade with the United States. His mother was his slave, but with the father's affection and pride there mingled an element of canny care.

"He is a fine lad, Hector, and with a clever eye in his head," his father would say, "but he will be the better of a modicum of supervision whatever."

"He is like me, Simon," his mother would reply, "an adventurer."

"And that is true, my dear. It is the grand freebooter you would have made, my lass. It is as well ye have had me to overlook you, I am thinking." Simon's look, however, took the edge off his words.

The daughter, some five years younger than the son, was her father's child. She had his cool, clear head, his cautious wisdom in practical affairs and yet in her burned the lambent flame of her mother's artistic nature. She was a great friend of the Governor, but with her father's fearless spirit and ready tongue. A very delicate physical organism was her handicap which subjected her to periods of nervous debility with acute and prolonged suffering.

With all that could be done for appearance, Red Rory was keenly conscious of his disordered clothing and his cut and bruised face as he approached the dining-room of Simon Fraser's house.

"You have a grand house here, Cousin Simon. Had I known it was so grand, I would not have been here to-night looking as I am."

"Wait you till you see herself," said Simon with a chuckle. "You will not be long thinking of your clothes, not you." And so Red Rory found it.

As a servant threw open the dining-room door, Simon announced in a loud voice :

"My cousin, Roderick Lovat Fraser, known to the commonalty as Red Rory or Koree Rouge, according to taste."

Simon Fraser's prognostication Red Rory found to be accurate. The moment his eyes lighted upon the lady of the house he forgot all about his own appearance.

Straight and tall for all her threescore years and ten she stood, the mellow radiance of fire and candlelight warming the pale ivory of her chiselled features and the pure white of her hair piled high above her forehead with a touch of rose.

For three ticks of the grandfather clock in the corner, the flashing black eyes searched his face with a piercing gaze, then grew soft in their warm acceptance.

"Enter, my dear cousin." The voice filled the room with its tones softly resonant, rich in emotional quality. "Come !" she said, her hand outstretched and raised high in welcome.

Red Rory hastened to her, took her hand in his and raised it to his lips.

"Aha ! Un preux chevalier ! Simon, I perceive your judgment is sound. Come ! I am a Frenchwoman. You have the French blood in you ; besides, you are my dear cousin, is it not so ?" With a quick almost girlish smile she offered her cheek.

In swift response Red Rory kissed her first on the one cheek and then after the French manner on the other.

"Aha ! Voilà ! This young man, he will do !" she cried gaily. "Now, there is your cousin Héloïse. You may salute her as well."

He turned to the girl, tall, slight, with soft brown hair waving over a face pale and lined with pain but not unbeautiful, and looking at him with cool grey eyes.

"I am a Scots cousin, Rory," she said, offering her hand with a boyish grin.

"So am I," said Rory, smiling back at her and taking her hand. "But French as well," he added as he stooped quickly and kissed her cheek.

"Aha! L'audace! Toujours l'audace!" exclaimed Madame. "He will do, Simon, he will do. Now to dinner. But before we sit down, my dear cousin, you will permit me to sympathize with you in your loss to-day. We know about La Vitesse, of her brilliant triumph to-day and of her too tragic ending. Your grief, your heartbreak is honouring to her and worthy of you. We offer our sympathy. We saw her this afternoon. Ah! Mon Dieu, a thing of wings! Ah, I could weep for her." The soft tender cadence of her voice, the tears in her eyes, moved Red Rory beyond power of speech. He could only take the hand offered and bow in silence.

While his life lasted, Red Rory was never to forget that evening. The great room with its dark panelled walnut walls and rich tapestries, its solid walnut furniture, its massive dining-table reflecting the gleam of old silver and cut glass, the huge fireplace all aglow with great hardwood logs, made a picture that never faded from his memory.

His impression of the dinner itself was vague enough. There was the best of food, wines far beyond the powers of his uncultured palate to appreciate, topped off with a glass of the famous "Drumfogie." But clear, vivid and warm with emotion was his memory of the party about the dining-table and of what followed in the sitting-room.

There was first of all Simon Fraser himself, but transformed. He had somehow shed his hard-headed, canny trading shell and had become a courteous gentleman of the old school in manners, in speech. Actually he was speaking French, and not of the habitant but of books, of the stage, his wife's French in fact. Rory could hardly credit his eyes and ears, the conversation was so brilliant.

Afterwards the talk was of politics, Hector taking the side of independence and democracy.

"The people? A Republic, eh?" said his father, with a grim smile. "The people! The Lord deliver us from people!"

"Hark!" cried Madame, who for all her years had very sharp ears. "Simon, what is that?"

Already the men were on their feet.

"It sounds to me very like 'the people,'" said Simon. "We will be seeing about this."

There was a sound of loud hammering followed by the crash of splintering glass.

"Ah, mon Dieu!" cried Madame. "Le Commune! My dear!"

"Good night, dear cousin," said Red Rory. "You have given me the happiest evening of my life. And to you, Cousin Héloïse, good night. I would like to see more of you." He hastily made his adieux and ran downstairs after the others.

"My dear Héloïse, that is a young man after my own heart. Un preux chevalier."

"He is a nice boy, mamma."

"It is unfortunate he is so young. Your father says he is a coming man in this country. He is a natural leader of men."

"He is only a boy," murmured her daughter. "But a very dear boy. Now I am going to take a look at 'the people,'" she added, running away for her cloak.

"And me," said her mother, picking up her staff. "They are interesting, these 'people.'"

CHAPTER X

WHEN Madame Fraser and her daughter arrived at the back entrance to the store, a wild scene greeted their eyes. In the clear moonlight they could see a milling mass of men filling the narrow street, with

some seeking entrance through the broken windows, a raging, roaring mob, evidently without leadership, without unity, without purpose, from their confused cries.

"Down with the Government! Down with the English! To hell with the Scotch party! Down with the military!"

The only sign of organization was visible in a group of students led by two young fellows who were striving to draw the mob off towards the Upper Town. Their cries were for the champions of the French party in the Assembly. "Bédard! Taschereau! Blanchet!"

Those seeking entrance, however, were moved by no lofty motives. They were of the *canaille*, and loot was their immediate object. They had been sampling some of Simon Fraser's goods, those of liquid variety. With generous and uproarious jubilation they were passing from lip to lip bottles round and square. The square variety seemed more popular. At the demolished window and door Simon Fraser, his son Hector and Red Rory were fighting back the crowd with axe-handles.

Madame Fraser stood for a few moments surveying the scene from the back stair. Then with only the slightest aid from her staff she moved down upon the struggling mob. Her husband, glancing over his shoulder, came running.

"My dear! Go back!" he cried, frantic with terror.

She waved him aside with a regal sweeping gesture and with slow grace moved forward, stood in the very window and raised her hand.

"Messieurs! Ecoutez-moi, s'il vous plaît!" Her glorious voice soared out over the mob. The voice, her commanding pose, her radiant smiling face hushed the mob to silence.

"Messieurs!" As the vibrant voice floated out into the moonlight, caps, toques, chapeaux came off and rough-looking men in scores stood bending in respect before her.

"You wish something?" she cried in her delicious

Parisian accent. "A bottle of wine perhaps? Hector?" But Hector had vanished. "Ah, Simon, if you please." Her hand was outstretched and pointing.

"But of course," said her husband, playing up with a gallant bow and hastening to her with a bottle in each hand.

"Voilà!" With a bewitching little tilt to her chin, she handed a bottle to a great hulking habitant who stood near her, transfixed with her loveliness.

"Madame!" he murmured, bending low before her, his blue toque pressed to his heart.

"Another?" she cried, handing him a second bottle.

"Mais non!" he exclaimed. "C'est assez bien!" He knocked off the neck of the bottle against a hitching-post. "Messieurs!" he cried. "A la Madame! A ses beaux yeux!"

He lifted high the bottle and poured out the wine in a ruby stream upon the snow.

A storm of cheers greeted the gallant act.

"Merci! Mon brave! Merci, mille fois!" she cried, kissing her hands to the crowd.

"Vive la Madame!" yelled the crowd.

"En avant!" cried the leader of the student gang, waving his toque towards the white-haired actress, who stood bowing and kissing her hands to them as if saluting a crowd of enthusiastic devotees applauding her performance. Offering her hand to Red Rory, she stepped gaily and proudly back from the window and with never a backward look disappeared up the stairs, scoring perhaps the most superb histrionic triumph of her life.

Under the inspiration of the student band and its political supporters, the mob moved towards the Upper Town, to loot *en route* the stores of Scotch and American merchants, their shouts and songs dying away in the distance.

"Poor children," murmured Madame as she moved up the stairs towards the house. "They are so easily amused."

"Madame, you are wonderful, if you will permit me," said Red Rory with reverent fervour.

"Ah! It is nothing! A little courage! A little sympathy! A little humour!"

"A great soul, Madame! A great, superb art."

"Ah, well, one grows old!"

"Old? There is no such word with Madame."

"Flatterer! But where do you go now? You are not for the streets? It is not safe."

Red Rory laughed. "I saw some of my Malbaie men following the students. They are not of the canaille, but they are in a dangerous mood."

"M. Bédard, eh?"

"No, not so much. They are thinking of Vitesse and the soldiers."

"And of Red Rory?"

"Perhaps a little. So I must run after them."

"I suppose it is useless to say 'take care.'"

"Quite, mamma. The Malbaie men are his men."

Once more Red Rory said good night and was off downstairs at a run. In the store, Simon and two or three of his lads were busy clearing away the mess and boarding up the windows.

"Can't wait, Cousin Simon. The Malbaie men are too quiet. I didn't hear one of them in that mob, but I saw them there."

"Rory, wait you a minute." The old man came quite close to him. "The lad, Hector, you understand. He is out yonder, but for what I cannot say. Perhaps you may come up with him. He is sometimes not so wise. Indeed I am saying to you"—his voice dropped to a husky whisper—"he is not so wise perhaps as he thinks he is. This is a dangerous night. These fools will work a mischief."

"They can't do much harm, Cousin Simon, a few windows, more or less. I am not anxious about that. But I do not want my men mixed up in foolishness. They must be at work to-morrow. The General—I promised him."

"No, that is not the trouble, Rory. A few windows? No. But there are those that will be making this an occasion for serious trouble. And I do not want Hector to be involved in that kind of folly. I am not going to tell you any more. But if you can, keep him out of folly."

"All right, cousin. But I must run now. Good night."

Red Rory could hear the shouting and singing of the mob as they moved up towards the Upper Town. It was an easy thing to make his way to the head of the procession. At the Taschereau mansion there was an enthusiastic demonstration with enthusiastic speech-making in which young Louis Joseph Papineau took the commanding part.

Tall, handsome, with a clear, sonorous voice that carried far over the closely-packed masses filling the street and the courtyard in front of the Taschereau house, the young man, with the masterly skill of the born orator, played upon the emotions of his hearers.

In spite of himself, Red Rory was compelled to listen. The argument was often faulty, the facts often distorted, but there was enough truth to form a basis of an appeal to the passions of the habitant. It was a scathing indictment of the policy of the present bureaucratic administration.

As Red Rory listened, the habitant in him boiled with indignation at the wrongs of his people, while, at the same time, the shrewd, cautious, disciplined Scottish mind in him revolted at the clever, unscrupulous and one-sided manipulation of facts and at the unreasoning appeal to passion. In the uncertain light of the moon he sought to discover his own Malbaie men, but found it for the most part impossible. André McNab he observed listening quietly, but close to the speaker with face uplifted and enwrapt he saw Polydore Hammel. Young Papineau was sure of one devotee at least. In the ring of students about the speaker he saw Alain's face, eager, excited, passionate.

"We only seek our rights!" concluded the speaker. "Our rights as British subjects. We are British subjects and we wish to remain British subjects."

"No! Liberty!" shouted a man in a long overcoat and beaver cap that proclaimed him of the better class.

"Well, we must keep to practical politics. We can only hope for liberty under the British flag."

"Why?" cried the voice. "There are other ways. Others have found them. Liberty, say I, any way we can!" Scattering cheers greeted this declaration.

Young Papineau was clearly disturbed. He had no sympathy with the American party in the city, nor had the mass of the habitants before him. Indeed the cleavage was definite and fixed between the officials and supporters of the Government and the English-speaking traders, many of whom were of American origin, on the one side, and the great body of the habitants and many of the so-called *noblesse* represented by the Seigneurs, the professional class and a few large merchants and traders, on the other.

"I speak for Canadians, whose fathers first ploughed the seas to reach this wild land, penetrated its trackless forests, opened up trade routes along every river and lake and planted the sacred emblem of our holy faith among these savage tribes. We love our land. It is bought with tears, agonies and blood, and we claim as our right to live here as freemen and not as slaves. Canada for the French Canadians who discovered it and made it what it is and for all others who wish to live with us here and build up a great and glorious civilization as free men." Wild cheering greeted his outburst, completely overwhelming the beaver cap and his group of sympathizers.

"Vive la Liberté! En avant!" cried the young orator, setting forth once more on his march. There was nothing for Red Rory to do but follow. The procession made its way through the Upper Town, pausing at the houses of well-known sympathizers with the mem-

bers of the House of Assembly, and finally swinging round by the entrance to the Château St. Louis. There a halt was made. An ugly spirit seized the mob. Groans, execrations of the Governor and the Legislative Council rose high above all the other sounds.

Suddenly a voice rose high and clear. "Why these fortifications? Down with the fortifications!" The response was immediate and savage. There was among the workmen of the city a sullen resentment against the bringing in of men from the parishes for the work of construction.

"Come on! Down with the fortifications," yelled the beaver cap, leading a part of the mob in a rush towards the works. Heedlessly, recklessly, the rest of the mob followed.

"Malbaie à moi! André! Polydore! A moi!" Red Rory's voice rang out high and clear. Setting himself in the path of the students he sought to turn them from the rest of the crowd.

"Alain! Papineau! What are you doing? This is treason! Alain, come here!" He caught the youth as he was rushing along. "You young fool! Where are you going?"

"Let me go!" cried the boy, mad with excitement.

"Papineau! You are no traitor to your country." He seized the young orator by the coat collar and held him fast.

"Traitor? Not I!"

"Those are traitors there! These fortifications are our defences against the enemy."

"But certainly!" cried young Papineau; with a loud voice he halted the student band.

"Ici! A moi!" he shouted. "Defend the walls! En avant!" He pointed to the rabble who had broken into the tool-shed and with sledge-hammers, pickaxes, and crowbars were hard at work upon the new part of the walls not yet thoroughly hardened.

"Men of Malbaie!" cried Red Rory. "Will you

allow those canaille to destroy your work? Polydore, are you a coward? André, get your men together!"

From every direction there came running Malbaie men suddenly wakened to the outrageous nature of the work of the mob and stung to fury at the destruction of the labour of their hands by this city mob whom they heartily despised.

In the midst of the wreckers was the beaver cap, urging, stimulating, directing the work of destruction, himself swinging a pick with telling effect upon a newly built bastion. With a cry of rage André McNab sprang at him. But the beaver cap avoided him and using his pick as a pike, charged head on at his assailant, catching him on the side of the head a deadly blow and laying him flat.

"Aha! My man! That will settle you for a time," he cried with a loud laugh.

The words were hardly out of his mouth when like a tiger Rory was upon him. But the beaver cap was a man of his hands. Dropping his pick he braced himself for the attack and met Rory's rush with a straight arm to the face, lifting him clear off his feet into the arms of a Malbaie man, where he lay dazed and helpless.

"Come on!" cried the beaver cap. "Who is next?"

For answer came Alain, who had followed Red Rory close. With a blind rush the lad made at him, was met by a short upper-cut on the chin which laid him low at Rory's feet.

"Anyone else?"

"Yes, me," roared Polydore, who had cleared a bit of the wall free of the mob and now came running.

"Polydore!" cried Red Rory. "Stop!" Polydore came immediately to Red Rory's side. "Don't touch him!" gasped Red Rory who was recovering his strength. "Stand by. I—will—kill—him."

"Come, then!" tormented the beaver cap. "You haven't got enough yet."

Without a word Red Rory stood up, shook himself together and moved slowly towards his opponent, who

stood smiling, waiting him in the attitude of a skilled boxer.

"Boss," pleaded Polydore, clinging to Red Rory. "You are sick. Let me at him. I will eat him, me!"

Red Rory pushed him off and moved again forward to the attack.

The beaver cap, with a quick, light step, danced forward, feinted with his right and drove hard at Red Rory's head with his left. But Red Rory was not there. Again his opponent attacked, but again Red Rory dodged round him.

"Oh, come now! Don't be afraid!" cried the beaver cap, pressing hard upon his enemy, driving in heavy blows, some of which Red Rory avoided, and others he stopped.

"Good! We have some science here, eh? Well, well! Edinburgh, eh? Well, this is interesting. Come on, then, don't run!"

But Red Rory was rapidly getting back his strength. He met the next rush with a stiff arm and followed with a quick jab to the chin which shook his opponent rudely. At once the beaver cap changed his tactics. He realized that rush methods would no longer do. He must proceed with more caution. Red Rory now began to move with light feet circling about his foe, meeting every blow with a stiff guard and giving back blow for blow.

Polydore and André, who had recovered consciousness, with other Malbaie men kept off the mob.

"Sacré tonnerre!" cried the big Canadian joyously. "You have him, Roree Rouge! En avant, mon vieux! Eet him up! 'cré mille tonnerres!"

Suddenly there was a cry from the rear. "The soldiers! The soldiers!"

The beaver cap seemed to realize that he must finish this matter off with all speed. With a swift leap within Red Rory's guard he delivered a heavy left at half-arm. But Red Rory blocked it and again sent a savage right to his chin, which shook his opponent, with a straight left

to his heart and followed up with a driving right to his neck, knocking off his cap and hurling him to the ground.

A wild yell broke from Polydore. "'cré mille tonnerres ! Mon enfant !"

But the beaver cap was on his feet again like a cat and minus his cap came on again. Once more came the cry : "The soldiers !"

Advancing swiftly upon his enemy, Red Rory caught sight of his face in the dim moonlight.

Immediately his hands dropped to his side.

"You !" he gasped, looking into the face of Hector Fraser. "For Heaven's sake get out of this," he said in English.

"It might be as well. Another time perhaps !" he said with a smile, and picking up his cap pulled it down over his face, turned and ran off with the mob, who before the advancing soldiers were disappearing like rabbits in all directions.

"Gather up these tools," ordered Red Rory. "Alain, you all right ?"

"Right enough," answered the boy sullenly, picking up the pickaxe which the beaver cap had dropped.

"Well, let us go along. There won't be any more of this now." He picked up a crowbar, and with Polydore and André carrying their tools set off for the tool-shed.

"Halt there !" commanded the sergeant in charge of the soldiers.

"I am gathering up these tools," said Red Rory. "They are scattered all over the place."

"Are they indeed ? Well, you just halt there. The lot of you. Hello ! Been fightin', eh ? Well, you had best come along."

"Where is your commanding officer ?" demanded Red Rory.

"You will meet him soon enough."

Protest was vain. Polydore was for fighting their way free. It would be a simple affair. But this his boss forbade. Red Rory's demand to see the Governor, the

General, Lieutenant Fitz-Gibbon, the sergeant received with a succession of derisive grunts. "You'll see 'em fast enough, you will," was his reply.

Polydore was sent down to the common jail. Red Rory and André were taken to the guard-house, the others slipped away in the dim light.

The following morning Red Rory and André were brought before the O.C. of the garrison. Red Rory was in a towering passion, but made his statement in a clear, concise if somewhat haughty manner.

"Take away these men. The Magistrate will deal with them in the court."

"But meantime my work is being stopped," said Red Rory angrily.

"Your work? You should have thought of that last night," said the Colonel with a weary air of boredom.

Red Rory stepped back quickly towards the wall and seized a heavy chair.

"I demand to see General Brock. I am working under his orders on the fortifications. I am in charge."

"Take him away!" said the Colonel to the sergeant.

Then Red Rory went wild. He swung the chair lightly in his hands.

"I am asking to see the General. His work is waiting me. I warn you, I will not be arrested."

"The guard, sergeant," snapped the Colonel. "Ah! Well. Here you get your wish. Good morning, General."

"Good morning, Colonel Holt. I wanted to ask you — Oh, hello, Fraser? Been in the wars? It looks as if you'd been through a riot."

"I have, sir," replied Red Rory, pale with rage.

"Tell me about it. Excuse me, Colonel." He took a seat. "Well?"

Red Rory told his tale with flaming wrath. The General could not keep his mouth from twitching as he listened to the story.

"By Jove, Colonel, your sergeant will never be in greater danger in his life. Don't you know this man?"

He is my foreman of works on the fortifications." The Colonel gaped at his General.

"Then what was he doing with that mob of rioters last night with a pickaxe in his hand tumbling down the new bastion?" inquired the Colonel, much disgusted.

"What about it, Fraser?" asked the General.

"We were just driving off the rioters when the soldiers came, sir. The sergeant wouldn't listen to me."

"We found them fighting," said the sergeant. "And this—man—with a crowbar in his hand. It looked bad."

"Crowbar?" said the General, looking at Red Rory.

"Yes, sir, the wreckers had broken open our shed and got out our tools and were at the walls when we came on them."

"I say, Colonel, you were at the race yesterday?" said the General. "This was the man that drove the winner."

"By Jove! That's where I saw him," said the Colonel, much excited. "Thought he was a chap I had before me two weeks ago in that last rumpus." The Colonel rose from his desk and came to Red Rory with hand outstretched.

"Awfully sorry, don't-che-know. Beastly mistake. Demned sorry. You drove a beautiful race and a really wonderful mare."

Red Rory's face cleared instantly.

"Thank you," he said. "Sorry I lost my temper. But I wanted to be back on the work. Can I be excused, sir?" said Red Rory to the Colonel. "The men will be waiting orders."

"Yes, yes. Sergeant, for Heaven's sake see that this man gets breakfast and a drink. Good Lord, General, what a mess! Awfully sorry, old chap. The other fellow goes with him." He shook Red Rory cordially by the hand and accompanied him to the door.

Red Rory had just finished with his inspection of the damage done his construction work on the previous night

when Lieutenant Fitz-Gibbon came with a peremptory summons to the Governor's presence.

"Now what the devil does he want of me? Doesn't he know we are all in a mess with this job?"

"Come, come, young man! It is His Excellency's order I am bringing you. So quick march it is."

"André," shouted Red Rory.

André came running up. "Keep those men moving. Drive them like hell!"

"Let me alone," answered André savagely. And in a wrathful mood Red Rory went his way.

The Governor was in no mood for trifling.

A sleepless night left him with worn body and ragged nerves. A report had been handed him by his Secretary of the disturbance of the previous night. "Rioting" was the Secretary's word. "Rioting and plunder." But most ominous of all was the report of the attempt to destroy the new fortifications in which the Governor took peculiar pride, as if they had been the outcome of his own planning and policy rather than of the steady persistence and invincible energy of his General-in-Chief, Isaac Brock. This was a most significant occurrence. The attack upon the fortifications had evidently been planned and was under the leadership of men of importance in the community. A gentleman and a man of military bearing was known to have been in command of the mob at this particular point. The matter was of such moment that he had called into informal conference the General and the chiefs of his staff, Bishop Plessis, the supreme head of the Roman Catholic Church in Quebec, the judges, the magistrates and certain of the leading merchants and traders of the English party. Among these was Simon Fraser, who since break of day had been busy superintending the repairs to his shop windows and consequently was in no pleasant mood.

The Governor had just finished his statement when Lieutenant Fitz-Gibbon ushered Red Rory into the room.

A swift glance he swept around the company. He had not expected an assemblage such as this.

"Well, my man," said the Governor brusquely, "I understand you were involved in this affair last night."

"May I ask to what you refer, sir?" said Red Rory, straightening his back and looking the Governor in the eye.

"This rioting and plundering," said the Governor sharply.

"Whoever told that I was involved in rioting and plundering, your Excellency, is a liar," said Red Rory, with face white with fury.

"You were arrested, were you not?"

"I refer you, sir, to General Brock."

"I refer to you and I want your answer."

"If you mean that I was engaged in rioting, my answer is no. If you ask if I was arrested, my answer is yes, your Excellency."

"What is the evidence?" said the Governor, turning to his Secretary.

"Permit me, your Excellency," said General Brock in a quiet voice.

"The evidence is here," snapped the Governor, whose ragged nerves rendered him incapable of judicial proceeding.

The General rose deliberately and said in a pleasantly conversational voice :

"It will save your time if I make a statement, I think, your Excellency."

"The evidence is here," interpolated the Secretary.

The General's blue eyes took a deeper hue, as he turned half round and fixed a steady gaze upon the interrupter.

"These are the facts, your Excellency. This man is in my employ and working under my orders and is responsible to me. It is not my custom to allow any man to interfere in my command." The words came like a sword cut through the silence.

"This evidence is from the officer making the arrest."

Slowly the General turned his blazing eyes upon the Secretary and stood rigid for some seconds, then without a word he quietly resumed his seat.

"You were about to say something, General," said the Governor courteously.

The General remained silent and motionless for another second or two.

"The evidence——" began the Secretary.

"Silence!" said the Governor, bringing down the flat of his hand hard upon the table.

The Secretary rose. "May I be excused, you——"

"Sit down, sir!" thundered the Governor. "Must I teach you manners?"

The Governor turned courteously toward the General. "Pardon me, General!" he said quietly. "You were about to say something, I believe."

"Yes, your Excellency," said the General with a pleasant smile as he turned his back upon the Secretary. "The fact is there was a mistake made last night, a quite pardonable mistake, indeed." He proceeded to make a full statement of the case in an easy, almost humorous, manner, and taking his time about it. Before he had finished, the Governor had recovered his self-command and had begun to see the grim humour of the trick the Fates had played upon the unfortunate defenders of the fortifications.

"So you had no breakfast, Fraser?" said the Governor with a chuckle.

Red Rory stood wrathfully silent, unable to appreciate the humour of the situation.

"Fitz-Gibbon will attend to that matter, your Excellency," said the General.

"It appears, Fraser, that we all owe you an apology," said the Governor. A quick flush came to Red Rory's white face. "And what is more, be gad, we all owe you our very hearty thanks for your courage and promptness last night, eh."

"No, sir," said Red Rory. "I hated to see my work spoiled—that's all."

The Governor laughed heartily.

"The Scottish thrift, eh, Simon?" he said. "And you appear to have suffered a bit in the cause." With another chuckle the Governor pointed to Red Rory's discoloured face.

"I wasn't ready for him," growled Red Rory.

"By the way," said the Governor, "did you recognize your assailant?"

Red Rory hesitated for an instant. "The light was not good. It was difficult to make out faces."

The Governor noticed his hesitation.

"Have you no idea who it was? The report says he appeared to be a gentleman and a military man."

Red Rory flashed an imploring glance at the General. "He did not seem to me to be a military man—I didn't—the light was——"

"Really, your Excellency, there was a good deal of confusion and a somewhat brisk exchange of compliments. The man seemed to be one of the mob bent on mischief generally. I do not attach any significance to the attack upon the fortifications."

"Well, well, General, allow me to compliment you upon the loyalty and fidelity of your chief of works. But I do think you owe him a breakfast," added the Governor with another chuckle.

"I entirely agree. Mr. Fitz-Gibbon, I think, can be trusted to attend to that matter."

"Very good," said the Governor. Then, rising and shaking Red Rory warmly by the hand, he said very earnestly: "And will you allow me to offer you my personal thanks, eh, Mr. Fraser, for a very fine bit of prompt and plucky service?"

"And my orders are, Fraser, first breakfast, then work," said the General with a slight smile.

"Certainly, sir," said Fitz-Gibbon, promptly saluting,

and carried Red Rory off with him to the best breakfast of Red Rory's life.

"And now, gentlemen, let me say that I am impressed with the General's presentation of the situation. It is a very real relief to my mind to feel that the attack upon the fortifications had no special political significance. The report that these men engaged upon the works were involved in the attempt to destroy them was most disturbing. This removes the most disquieting feature from the riot of last night." The Governor turned over a bundle of papers lying before him. "I think that will be all this morning. I find myself rather exhausted. Thank you, gentlemen, for your attendance."

At this point all were startled by a loud knock at the door. The Secretary went to inquire.

"I should like to see His Excellency." The voice was clear and firm.

"His Excellency is engaged," said the Secretary, proceeding to close the door. But a foot inserted held the door open.

"I wish to see His Excellency upon a matter of importance." The voice, clear-cut and forceful, penetrated, the room.

"I have already told you His Excellency is engaged. You cannot see him now."

"The Lord deliver us," muttered Simon Fraser. "It is Red Rory."

"Who is there, Ryland?" exclaimed the Governor wrathfully. "Bring him in."

"It is——"

"Bring him in at once."

The Secretary threw the door open and in walked Red Rory, followed by Miss Christine, Josette and a habitant.

At once the Governor, the General, Simon Fraser and Mr. Langford were on their feet. The others more slowly followed their example.

"Ah, Miss Nairne!" exclaimed Sir James. "This is an unexpected pleasure."

Miss Christine made a profound curtsy.

"Your Excellency will pardon this intrusion, I am sure, when you hear the cause of this bold, I hope not rude, interruption. But I am in distress."

"In distress? My dear Miss Nairne, you were entirely right in coming to me," said the Governor kindly, as he offered her his hand.

The quick tears came to Miss Christine's fine blue eyes.

"Oh, I knew you would hear me," she cried, taking the Governor's hand in hers and curtsying low.

"Will you not be seated?" said Sir James, pointing to the chair which the General had placed at her disposal.

"Thank you, but I will not detain you. I am covered with confusion at breaking in upon your time in this way."

"My dear Miss Nairne. My time is wholly yours. Take your time," he said kindly, as Miss Christine stood wiping her eyes.

"I am ashamed of myself!" she said. "You know I am not the weepy kind. This is Miss Josette McNab. This is Aristide Delorme. They are both censitaires of my mother. Red Rory—I mean Mr. Roderick Fraser of Malbaie—you know."

"Now, I will briefly state what I want. Josette came to me this morning with the distressing news that another of our Malbaie men, Polydore Hammel, one of Red Rory's captains on the fortifications, was arrested last night, tried this morning and condemned to a month's imprisonment."

"Ah!" said the Governor. "On what charge?"

"On the absurd charge of rioting and treason," said Miss Christine, her blue eyes flashing. "He was tried before a magistrate who could not understand French. Polydore can speak but a few words of English. He could neither understand the charge nor make defence."

"Was there no interpreter present?" inquired the Governor.

"Interpreter?" she said indignantly. "Aristide will tell us about the interpreter." She spoke rapidly in

French to Aristide, who with much gesticulation poured forth his tale, finally pointing an accusing finger straight at Magistrate Pettypiece.

"Your Excellency, Aristide says that this gentleman is the Magistrate."

"What? Mr. Pettypiece?" exclaimed the Governor.

"Your Excellency!" sputtered Mr. Pettypiece indignantly.

"Wait, please. One thing at a time," said the Governor. "Let us sit down. Now then, first of all may I ask—eh—Mr. Fraser about this man—what is his name?"

"Polydore Hammel," said Miss Christine. "One of my mother's people at Malbaie, now engaged with Red Rory on the fortifications."

"Thank you!" said the Governor with a smile at Miss Christine, whose flushed cheeks and flashing blue eyes lent an unwonted attractiveness to her face. "One of your men, eh, Fraser?"

"Yes, your Excellency. One of my captains."

"Tell us what happened last night."

"Polydore was with me, at my side, seeking to defend the fortifications, and was more than anyone of my men responsible for driving off the mob. Indeed he suffered heavily in the encounter."

"He had no part in the rioting?"

"None at all. No more than I. He was with me during the whole night."

"Mr. Pettypiece, a mistake has obviously been made here," said the Governor.

"Your Excellency, there was a perfectly fair trial," began Mr. Pettypiece with heat.

"That matter will be thoroughly investigated later," said the Governor coldly. "Meantime I suggest that there has been a miscarriage of justice. This man——"

"Polydore Hammel," said Miss Christine.

"Polydore Hammel was evidently arrested, as was Mr. Fraser, under a misapprehension—a very excusable mis-

apprehension. He was engaged in a patriotic and praiseworthy effort to protect the defences of his country. Instead of being imprisoned he should be praised and rewarded. You will therefore see that an order is made at once for his release, Mr. Pettypiece."

Mr. Pettypiece bowed.

The Governor then turned to Miss Christine.

"You have done me a great service, Miss Christine," he said, taking her hand. "I wish to thank you on my own behalf, and on behalf of all true and loyal citizens."

Once more Miss Christine dropped him a profound curtsy. He shook hands with Josette, and waved a farewell to Red Rory and Aristide as they passed out.

CHAPTER XI

DURING the next few days Red Rory's hands were full. The *canaille* of Quebec in a few minutes had undone the work of days. This the men of Malbaie took as an insult as well as an injury. They were therefore only too eager to wreak vengeance upon that same *canaille* when opportunity offered. This naturally added materially to the burden of Red Rory's responsibility, already increased by the necessity of recovering the lost ground in the work upon the fortifications.

His chief source of anxiety was the son of Simon Fraser. Some days after the riot Hector drove up to the Château St. Louis with a friend and took the trouble to look up Red Rory at his work. His greeting was free and most friendly.

"Hello, Cousin Rory. You are pushing things along at a great rate here. Let me introduce an American friend of mine, Mr. Jason Appleby from Newport, sailor, trader, smuggler, thief and that sort of thing." Red Rory took the hand cordially offered him. "I am showing this friend of mine," continued Hector, "just what he will have to face if the Yankees are fools enough to

tackle Canada. You see, Jason, when my Cousin Rory here gets this parapet and these bastions completed with all the embrasures you see down the face there, you will have quite a nut to crack."

"I hope so. And I shall take pains to tell all I meet just how mad a thing it will be. Besides, what have the Canadians ever done to us that we should invade their peaceful country? If we want a whack at Britain we can get them somewhere else. On the sea, for instance."

"The sea, man? Are you crazy?" cried Hector.

"Not so crazy. We have a right smart lot of schooners and frigates. They are new, they are well formed and there are no smarter sailors afloat than our Yankee sailors."

"Yes, along with those you steal from us," said Hector.

"Well, now, if they came climbing up into your shrouds I guess you wouldn't exactly throw 'em into the sea. But there ain't going to be any war. We Easterners don't want it. No, sirree. New England, New York, yes and Pennsylvania too, the people with the brains and the money, don't want war, you can just bet on that."

"Well, I thought it wouldn't do any harm to show you your job," said Hector, "if you took it into your heads to take us on. Just take a look at this line." Together they walked the length of the parapet, Hector taking pains to point out the various batteries and gun emplacements. Red Rory had an uneasy feeling as he watched Hector and heard him discoursing upon the strength of the batteries, the number and size of the guns and general lie of the fortifications. Suddenly Simon Fraser's words flashed through his mind. "Too many Americans in this town." Surely Hector was doing a very unwise thing. He stepped over to his cousin and said:

"Perhaps your friend would like to look through the Château. The public rooms are supposed to be rather fine and old-fashioned."

"Good idea. Come along, old fellow! We will show you some old-world decorations."

"Don't know that I care about inside fixtures very much. This sort of thing suits me."

The keen grey eyes, the thin mahogany-hued face, the alert lean body, gave Red Rory the impression of controlled and concentrated energy, and yet there was an air of easy, careless geniality that seemed to cover as with a garment the sense of incisive power that lurked in every look and movement of Hector's American friend.

"Say! I'd like to see that river when she's flowing free, and full of shipping. I'm agoin' to sail up here some day, Hector, sure as you're born. Must be something wonderful, eh?"

"If you know your water," said Red Rory, with a shake of the head.

"Bad water, eh? What? Shoals? Reefs? Bars?"

"I'm only a young man, but many a fine ship have I seen wrecked on that waterway," said Red Rory, with solemn emphasis.

"What? Are you a sailor? Thought you were a trapper."

"I've sailed small craft into every nook and crack down the Gulf."

"That's the only way to learn water," said Jason.

"Where have you sailed most?" asked Red Rory.

"New England coast and south. Not much north. Don't know this Gulf water. Smack, schooner, barque, brigantine. I've sailed them all. Everything but a frigate, and that I'll sail before long."

For a single moment Red Rory had a glimpse of a keen brown face aflame as with an inner light, but only for a moment. Over the keen face there seemed to drop a filmy veil of soft and lazy nonchalance. But that swift glimpse awoke in Red Rory's heart a queer uneasiness. Jason Appleby stood gazing down the river.

"And that's where Kirke and Phips came up and at last Wolfe, greatest of them all. Say! Wolfe was the dandy boy! But—great jumpin' Jeremiah! He had six men-of-war, nine frigates and a flock of transports

and nine thousand of the best fighting men in the world—and——”

“Five thousand, only, landed,” corrected Red Rory.

“Well, what of it? He had the ships and the guns. Give me ships and guns—guns, lots o’ guns—I’d take any seacoast fortress in the world.”

Again came that inner, lambent flame gleaming through his eyes, even through the very pores of his skin as it seemed for one brief instant, and then the veil of lazy, easy good-humour.

“Too many Americans.” Once more the words of Simon Fraser flashed into Red Rory’s mind. And what was Jason Appleby doing with Hector? And what did Hector want of Appleby?

“Come along then, Appleby, if you are not going to view the splendid interior of this old Château. Let us do something of the town. By the way, Cousin Rory, we are about to call upon friends of yours, Miss Christine Nairne and their American friends, the Van Ranckens. You know them well, of course. Strange to say, I met them only two days ago. We got talking about the fortifications and your noble defence of them. Oh, have you learned anything more about your assailant?”

“Yes, I have found out something.”

“Ah! May I ask what it is?”

“Nothing much. Your father was very anxious to find out something, but I could tell him nothing.”

“Ah, I heard you declined to tell even the Governor.”

“There was nothing definite to tell. But I promised to keep a look out for him. I have a feeling I shall get him some day.”

“Good. But after all it was likely only a mad prank of one who wanted to show that he had no love for this unspeakable Government of ours which most people loathe and very few can tolerate.”

“Do you think so?”

“Yes, on the whole I think so. Indeed, the more I think of it the more certain I am that I am right.”

"I should really like to think so," said Red Rory earnestly.

"Be sure that's the explanation. And on the whole I do think it was quite fine of you not to throw suspicion upon anyone without very good reason. My mother, I know, would be glad if you should come up to-night. Our last party was rather rudely broken up, you remember. You made quite a hit with her. Miss Christine and her American friends are coming too. So come along."

"Thank you. I am afraid I cannot come," said Red Rory.

"Why not? Mother will be doing some of her favourite things. Come if you can."

"Thank you. Perhaps, if I can manage it," said Red Rory, with no intention of going. Somehow he could not see himself enjoying an evening in Simon Fraser's drawing-room with Hector and his friend, Jason Appleby, carrying on a brilliant conversation with Miss Christine and her American friends. Madeleine would be there. He cursed himself for a fool as he became conscious of a mad desire to see her again. "That settles it," he said to himself, as he walked home from his work to his hotel. "I want to see her more than anything else in the world. I may as well face it. I am a fool. I will not go. I will not see her again. She has forgotten all about me." Though as to this, when he thought of her voice, and her eyes when she last spoke to him, he was not quite certain. But at any cost he must forget. There was nothing in common between this rich, beautiful, high-bred American young lady and a Malbaie habitant, trapping and hunting for a living. Right here he would cut the thing clean out of his life. She would be leaving town in a few days, that would be the end of it. A dream would for ever be in his heart, but that would be all. He came to a dead halt on the street as he settled this matter definitely and for ever.

"Well, that's over and done with," he said aloud, stretching his arms high above his head.

"And what will that be, my lad?" said Simon Fraser's voice behind him. "Your job is not finished yet awhile."

"My job? Oh, up at the Château? Not for some weeks yet. But the men are doing fine. They are beginning to sing again at their work."

"I am wanting you to-night, Rory. And Madame will be wanting you too."

"You are having a grand party, Cousin Simon. Too grand for me. I will come to-morrow night."

"A grand party? And are you forgetting that you are Roderick Lovat Fraser's son? Are you not my cousin, forbye?"

"No, but I can make no contribution. I am not used to—to—that kind of thing, and, Cousin Simon, I would rather wait till to-morrow night."

"But it is to-night I am wanting you. Miss Christine and her friends will be there. I have asked your cousin, Josette, to come. There is a young American friend of Hector's I want you to meet."

"I have met him. I met him this afternoon."

"And where?"

"Up at my work. He was greatly interested in the fortifications."

"And was he that now? And what did he see of them?"

"Everything that could be seen from the parapet and the esplanade. He was very keen to see all there was to see."

"And Hector with him? Well, he might have known better. And what sort of a lad would he be?"

"To my mind a very clever chap. A sailor, Hector said, trader, smuggler, and he looked like it."

"Too many American visitors, traders and the like, these days. I will be speaking to the Governor about it. But you will be coming to-night, lad. It is important."

There was no escape from Simon's command, and in consequence Rory made his appearance amid a very gay and very splendidly dressed party.

They were on the floor dancing habitant jigs, Scotch reels, strathspeys, schottisches, with Miss Christine and Josette instructing Madeleine and her brother Max in the mysteries of these ancient folk dances. When Red Rory appeared there was a shout for his assistance.

"He is the best dancer of Malbaie," cried Miss Christine. "Isn't he, Josette?"

"Red Rory is the best dancer I know," said Josette to Max Van Rancken, her partner.

"Except Josette McNab," said Rory, overhearing her.

"Let us show them a Scotch reel as it should be done. Cousin Rory and Josette, Hector and Christine," said Madame Fraser. "Oh, yes, Hector, you are a good dancer. And our friends will see this dance in good style. Strike up," she ordered the fiddlers brought in for the occasion.

There followed some modern dances for which the rôle of teacher was taken in turn by Miss Louise and Miss Madeleine with some assistance from Jason Appleby, who showed himself a past-master of the art.

Then followed, as a very special treat and at the earnest request of Hector, some of Madame Fraser's greatest pieces from her large and varied repertoire.

The supper that followed might have been served from the kitchen of the new Great Union Hotel, so rich, so varied, so beautifully cooked were the viands offered.

Supper over, the company settled in groups about the blazing fire in the drawing-room for conversation. The presence of the Americans suggested as topics for discussion the characteristics of the peoples represented.

"For me," said Madame, "I find the American people possessed of great charm, more especially the people of the South. Delightful people with such charming manners. But we have not seen so many of them lately, owing to the political differences possibly. But there, we are not to discuss war. I am quite resolved on that." Madame was quite decided on this point and immediately proceeded to discuss the forbidden topic. "Though why

there ever should be war between your people and ours I never could see," she said, addressing Jason Appleby, who with Christine and Louise, made a little group of their own at one side of the fire.

"Family connections, I suppose," replied the American with a smile. "But I really can't see what Canada has to do with England's quarrels."

"Why, indeed," said Miss Christine promptly, "except that we happen to belong to England."

"But why continue to belong to England and be involved in all her ancient quarrels and animosities? That is what I can't see. Why not be on your own?"

"No, no!" cried Madame. "No war discussion."

"But why not face the question?" said Hector. "Here we are representatives of two of the three nations involved."

"Three?" said Madame.

"Three," said Hector. "England, the United States, and the French Canadian people."

"That I refuse to discuss," said Miss Christine. "Let us keep to realities."

"Oh, very well," said Hector. "Two peoples. Shall we have war? Why? What will happen? A friendly talk will do no harm surely, mamma."

"Oh, very well. We are all dear friends. And, after all——"

"Yes, after all, we may have to face it sooner than we think," said Hector. "Why be afraid to look anything and everything that may come fairly in the face?"

"Afraid? Young man, you refer to me? Afraid?"

"I apologize, Miss Christine. It was certainly the wrong word to use to one of your race and family."

"You had better," said Miss Christine. "So go at it. Anything and everything is permitted. Two nations, three or four as the case may be. England is in now, and France and all Europe. Canada is already in—Rory's father—Josette's father were in. My brother, John, was in, poor dear. They gave their lives. It is

the same old war. England against France for the freedom of Europe. The sides may vary more or less, but those two are always in it. And now the United States are threatening to join our foes. Oh, yes, let us discuss it." Miss Christine's voice was vibrating with the intensity of her feelings. A deep silence followed her impassioned speech. Then Josette, leaving her place on the other side of the fire, came and sat upon the sofa beside Miss Christine and, taking her hand in both of hers, kissed it as she said :

"Miss Christine, I am with you. Oh, it is what I would say."

Miss Christine put her arm round the girl and drew her close.

"I am a fool," she said gruffly. "But I am a British soldier's daughter."

"And me too," said Josette, again kissing her hand.

"And I a British soldier's wife," said Madame, glancing with flashing eyes at her husband, who smiled at her in return.

"But you are French, Madame ?" said Jason Appleby.

"Ah, oui, vraiment ! French ! But not of the canaille of the Revolution, not of the unspeakable monstre Bonaparte."

"And you," he said to Josette, "are French Canadian. Of the people of this country who are ground down under the tyranny of a foreign government."

"Oh, la la !" said Madame with a laugh. "We grow very serious, do we not, Miss Christine ?"

"Certainly. Let us not be too serious," replied Miss Christine with a gay laugh, "though Rory and I had a touch of the tyranny of this same foreign government. We really bearded the lions in their den. Though a more lamb-like group of lions one could hardly imagine. Even the dear old Governor was anything but lion-like. One sharp roar he gave at that stupid magistrate, Petty-piece. Mr. Fraser, come here and tell me," summoning Simon Fraser to her side, "Is M. Pettypiece a fair

sample of these English magistrates and his method of handing out justice typical?"

"Entirely so!" called out Hector from the group on the other side of the fireplace.

"Hector!" chided his mother.

"Well, mother, I know what Father will say and I simply wished to guard Miss Christine from a wrong impression at the start." Hector's laugh was very disarming, but his mother was not to be appeased.

"Hector! Your father awaits your apology," she said in her grand manner.

"Oh, most certainly, dear mamma," replied Hector with a gay laugh. "I apologize, sir."

Simon nodded his head carelessly at him. "You need to mind your manners, my lad," he said. "You were asking about these English courts, Miss Christine. Some of them are a great boon to our French fellow-citizens in familiarizing them with our English procedure in the administration of justice. Everything depends upon the judge or magistrate. Where you have as judge a man trained in English law, all goes well, but with magistrates who know nothing about law and little about justice the results are lamentable, at times indeed farcical, as in the case of your Polydore."

"May I suggest a worse feature, father?" asked Hector.

"What Hector is bursting to tell you of is that the worst feature of these English courts in the hands of stupid and unscrupulous men is that not only is justice often travestied in their proceedings, but very often litigation is encouraged and lengthened out so that the legal suits are often greater than the amounts involved. These are some of our grievances which are aggravating the feelings of suspicion and dislike between the races, but which will pass away in time."

"What proportion of the people of this country are affected?" inquired Jason Appleby, who had listened to Simon Fraser with keen attention.

"Ninety per cent. at least," said Hector.

"Why doesn't England interfere and straighten things out? You would think she would have learned her lesson," said Appleby.

"Too busy fighting Napoleon, backed by the most of Europe, for the liberty of the world," said Héloïse promptly.

"Great chance for Canada," said Appleby.

"For Canada?" said Héloïse.

"Certainly. To shake off the English yoke."

"English yoke? What do you mean, young man?" said Miss Christine, all her British blood on fire.

"Why! Get free! Strike for your liberties. I guess you'll never get a better chance. Take this city. A few hundred properly led could seize the fortifications, and whoever holds Quebec, holds Canada. Gosh, what a chance." Appleby was enthusiastic.

"My dear young man. No one in Canada wants to shake off the English yoke."

"What about your ninety per cent. fretting and fuming against the stupid tyranny of your Government?"

"Yes, this local Government, M. Appleby," said Héloïse. "Not England."

"Tut, tut, Héloïse, you live in the Upper Town," said Hector. "Don't make any mistake. There are thousands who would be glad of a chance to shake free from English control."

"Then this is your chance. America would jump in and help like a shot," said Jason Appleby with eager enthusiasm.

"Yes, help herself to Canada," replied Héloïse with an ironic smile.

"No, no, never! We do not want to take Canada," cried Madeleine. "I am sure I am right. Do we, Max?"

"No, the best Americans have no desire to take Canada," said Max slowly. "At least the Americans I know best. Why should we invade a friendly neighbour?"

"Do you know the South and West, Miss Van Rancken?" inquired Appleby.

"Not so well. But the South are very noble people. I am quite sure they would not want to do anything so wicked. Oh, believe me, Héloïse, they would not."

"Your President's last speech didn't sound just like that," said Hector.

"Oh, I know! But he does not speak for America. I am sure he does not speak for America. You don't think so, Mr. Fraser?" she said, appealing to Simon.

"My dear young lady, I would be glad to think with you, but I fear all the signs are the other way."

"After all, it is not a question of America wanting Canada, but of Canada getting free from England's grip with America's help. Isn't that the point?" said Jason Appleby, his keen brown face illumined with a conciliatory smile.

"No!" said Héloïse.

"No! Certainly not!" cried Madeleine. "Why don't you say no, too?" she continued, turning upon Red Rory.

"Why?" said Red Rory. "Nothing will change the facts." His quiet, yet clear strong voice arrested the attention of the whole company.

"And what are the facts?" said Jason Appleby.

"I am only a boy, a habitant. I have lived in the woods and on the river almost all my life. What right have I to state facts?"

"As much as any of us, I fancy, Rory," said Christine. "Ye're a wise and obsairvin' chiel! So come along."

"You've got more sense than any of us—I mean of us youngsters," said Madeleine, with quick impulse followed by a vivid flush.

"You have been living and working for years among the people, Rory, and you will know what they are thinking," said Simon Fraser.

"Come, Cousin Rory, the facts, the facts," insisted Hector.

"About what in particular?"

"Does America want Canada?"

"I don't presume to tell Americans that. I do know that the President and the Secretary of War have declared that they have only to walk over Canada. There would be no fighting. Canadians would welcome them as deliverers."

"Next, does Canada want to be free from England?" asked Madeleine.

"No. I have heard more about that in this room, to-night, than all my life outside of it."

"Would America help Canada to independence of England?" asked Héloïse.

"The last answer settles this question. A matter of opinion, not fact."

"Another matter of opinion. Will there be war?" asked Jason Appleby.

"There will be war." Red Rory's voice was clear, solemn and final.

"And your reasons, may I ask?" Jason's face was hard, keen and aglow with that mysterious fire that now and then wrapped it like a flame.

"First," answered Rory, "the American Government needs war—a political necessity. Second, the present is an opportunity not to be lost. England is fighting the most of Europe. Third, America is enraged over the Right of Search and capture of neutral vessels. Fourth, the South and North claim they must have protection for their Western border. Fifth, the Americans would love to rule the continent from Gulf to Pole."

"One more question," said Jason, leaning eagerly towards Red Rory, his face like a hawk's. "Would the French Canadians fight for England against America?"

"My answer is, French Canadians will fight for their country to the last man against any invader."

"No!" shouted Hector. "What of those rioters the other night?"

"When the first tap of the war-drum sounds," said Red Rory, "every man will be in line."

"Thank God," said Simon Fraser in a low, deep voice.

"Mon Dieu, Roree ! You make me see that war," said Madame in an awed voice.

"If war comes," cried Jason Appleby, his voice ringing with a note of glad triumph, "it will end with the Stars and Stripes floating over that Château de St. Louis."

"It may be so !" said Red Rory. "But if so these streets will be full of dead men and they will not all be Canadians."

"Oh, my God, my God !" said Madeleine. "How terrible ! How wicked !"

"Ha ! Do you think so, Rory ?" cried Jason Appleby with a gay laugh. "Then must I haste away and get my ship ready. For if war comes you will see me come sailing up that river in Wolfe's track."

"And that means I, too, must get away home, for I pledge you my solemn word of honour, Mr. Fraser, that from this moment I shall do my damndest to keep my country from so infernal and so wicked a war." It was as if a stranger had stepped into the room. Young Max, from being a jolly, kindly, good-natured lad, without any sense of responsibility or any knowledge of great affairs, had in a single moment stepped into manhood with a man's full resolve to do a man's duty at the cost of a man's life.

The effect of young Van Rancken's statement upon the company was most profound. Red Rory, whose eyes were upon the face of Jason Appleby, was shocked at the swift transformation. The look of gay, half-serious, half-humorous challenge with which he had announced his intention of sailing up the river gave place to one of fiendish passion. He seemed ready for no less than killing the speaker. But only for a moment. When he spoke again he was once more his own master.

"With me my country first, always, peace or war, right or wrong," he said with a proud lift of his head.

But the party could not recover its tone of gaiety. The ghostly spectre of war had looked in upon them and could not wholly be banished. An hour or more passed in desultory talk and then came the break-up.

As the farewells were being said, Simon Fraser seized Red Rory. "What do you think of him?" he whispered eagerly.

"I am sorry he saw so much of our fortifications to-day," said Red Rory with a grim face. "He should see no more."

"Man, you are right. And he will be the last of them that will. I give you my word. I will be seeing Sir James to-morrow, and that I will."

Yet there was a charm about Appleby that was irresistible.

"Don't think I am a firebrand," he begged as he said farewell to Madame Fraser. "My father was a sailor under Paul Jones."

"I pray *le bon Dieu* will prevent war between our peoples who ought to be friends," she said. "But come again, my dear Mr. Appleby."

"I will come. I want to come. You are all so kind, so frank, so friendly. No, I should hate war."

"Come with me, Appleby," said Hector. "I want to show you the town at night. Cousin Rory, you will see the ladies safely home. We shall take care of Miss Josette."

"Roree, my dear boy, you must come often," said Madame to him in a hurried undertone as she kissed him good night. "Hector needs you. He is foolish. You are wise. You will come often—soon."

"Thank you, I will come," he said, deeply touched by the appeal in her voice.

"Madeleine wants you," whispered Héloïse as she said good night.

"What? No! I cannot—I don't——" he stammered.

"Silly boy, be a soldier," she said, holding him back

till Miss Christine and Mademoiselle Vallières had gone on with Max and thus left him with Madeleine, who was busy assuring Simon Fraser that she agreed with Max in regard to the war and that all her people were of her mind.

"My dear child, would to God there were more of your mind," said Simon Fraser, kissing the lovely face held up to him.

"Oh, la la ! My dear, you are a witch. He never kisses anyone. Not anyone except me," said Madame, patting her cheek.

"But I am like that too," declared the girl. "I never kiss anyone outside my own family, never, never."

"Ah, a good practice, but the time will come ! Ah, ma petite, c'est le bon temps ! N'est-ce pas, Simon ?" But Simon only looked at her and touched her arm.

With burning face Madeleine hurried off, followed by Red Rory.

The sitting-room door gave upon an enclosed garden from which a gate led to a street leading to the Upper Town by a steep ascent, a narrow street and dark, between high walls.

In silence they began to climb.

"Let me help you," said Red Rory, taking her arm. "You are trembling. Are you cold ?" he asked anxiously.

"No," she said in a low tone. "Oh, Rory, it is the war. You made me feel that it must come."

"Yes, it will come," said Rory gravely.

"Oh, I cannot bear the thought of it. Think, Rory ! Your people and mine killing one another, hating one another. You might come to hate me, Rory." Her voice shook.

"Hate you, Madeleine ?" He laughed a little scornful laugh. "No, no, I shall love you while I live. War ? What difference can war make ? I shall love you till I die." She stood still gazing at his face, white in the soft moonlight.

"Love me ?" she whispered as in a dream.

"Yes! It is madness, I know. I am a crazy fool!"

"Madness?" Her breath came quickly. "Oh, it is——"

"Don't say it," said Red Rory, hurrying his words. "Don't make it harder for me! I didn't mean to tell you. To-day I swore to myself no one should ever guess I was such a fool. Oh, I didn't want to come to-night. Simon made me come. You were going away to-morrow. I should never see you again and—oh, what a fool!"

"You were going to let me go without seeing you again? Oh, Rory!"

"Then you would never have known that I dare to love you."

"To love me?" she whispered, her hands going to her breast. "To love me. When did you?"

"The first day I saw you. The day I drove you behind Vitesse."

"Oh, Vitesse! Dear, dear Vitesse. You loved me that day—but you——" Her voice failed her.

"No, I did not know—I did not know—what love was. I knew only a great joy to be with you—to feel you press against me—to hear your voice. I didn't know what it was. Not then."

"Oh, Rory, when?" said Madeleine, still as if in a dream.

"When? When I was telling my mother in Malbaie that night, you remember?"

"Oh, yes! Oh, Rory!"

"Don't worry! I am not going to trouble you with my love."

"But your mother?" she asked anxiously.

"I told her about you. And—and she said, 'This American girl, is she very beautiful?' I remember I could not tell, but I thought so. Then she asked, 'Is she a good girl? Has she a good heart?' And I said, 'Oh, yes, she has a good true heart.' And then I knew—and then I saw I had been a fool."

"And your mother? Did she guess?" asked Made-

leine eagerly. "Oh, what did she say, Rory? Tell me." Rory remained silent. "What did she say? Tell me, Rory," said the girl, placing her hand on his arm and lifting her blue eyes eagerly to his face.

"She said—she said—'Keep your hand on your heart, my boy.' But," he added softly, "it was too late."

"Too late? Oh, Rory."

"Too late. I had given you my heart—all of it and for ever. But I am not sorry. I shall never be sorry—and now I am not sorry that you know. I did not mean to tell you, but it cannot hurt you to know that a man up in Canada—a habitant, trapper and trader—thinks of you—and will always be thinking of you by his camp-fire, under the stars—always of you so long as he lives."

"No, Rory," she said softly, the tears standing in her beautiful blue eyes as she gazed straight into his. "It will not hurt me to know that a man loves me—a man brave, gentle, noble, a man with a heart of gold. And oh, Rory—Why don't you take me into your arms and kiss me and kiss me and tell me you love me and will always love me?" With a tremulous smile she lifted her hands toward him.

"But, Madeleine!" he gasped, catching her wrists and pushing her from him. "Are you mad?"

"Yes, mad. Mad with love for you. Oh, Rory, don't push me away from you."

"Push you away from me?" cried Rory. "Non! Madeleine! This moment will be ours. Come war, come what may, I will have my taste of heaven now."

"Oh, this is madness! Wild, wild folly, Madeleine," he murmured between his kisses.

"Oh, but so lovely! So heavenly! What matters anything else?" she said, giving herself to him with all she had to give.

"But, Madeleine, what does this mean?" he said when they began to walk on again.

"Oh, the most wonderful thing in the world, that you love me, Rory, and that I love you."

"But, child, you know what love means?"

"Yes, I know now, Rory. Heaven!"

"But think—what will—oh, good heavens, what a mad fool I am. You will have to forget all about me, Madeleine."

"Forget you?" she laughed.

"But you must, Madeleine. You cannot keep on loving me."

"No, Rory, only so long as I keep on breathing," she cried, laughing up into his face.

"But listen to me!"

"Yes, Rory darling."

"But you must listen. This is all folly. What can come to us? What can we do, Madeleine?"

"You mean the war, Rory? Oh, I forgot the war. What can the war do to our love, Rory? Don't be absurd."

"No, I had forgotten the war too. You see what a fool I am."

"Yes, Rory dear. How wonderful we should both forget the war, and yet not so wonderful."

"But it is not the war. It is us. You're a lovely, beautiful, rich young lady belonging to one of the greatest American families."

"Yes, Rory dear. And you are a young Canadian boy—well born, clever, brave, strong, gentle—the most wonderful boy in all Canada—in all the world."

"Now, Madeleine, do be sensible. We must. We are getting near your home and there is so much to settle."

"Yes, Rory darling, what exactly?"

"Oh, Madeleine!" he cried desperately. "Don't you see I can never ask you to be my wife?"

"Your wife, Rory?" Her voice was low, thrilling, infinitely tender. "I never thought of that."

"No, of course not," said Rory. "It could never be. I never thought of it either."

"But you have not asked me, Rory? Aren't you going to ask me? You make me ashamed. You have never

even proposed to me and here I have been kissing you. Oh, Rory, hurry up or I shall die of shame ! ”

“ No, how can I ask you—a girl like you—to marry me ? It would be preposterous. ”

“ You might at least give me the chance, Rory. ”

“ But you wouldn’t—you couldn’t—you don’t mean to say you would marry me ? ”

“ I wouldn’t unless you ask me. How could I, Rory ? ”

“ But your people, Madeleine ? ”

“ There is only my father and my aunt and Max. And they are all so dear, they would be so proud of you. Max thinks you are a real man, Rory. Oh, let us not talk of anything so foolish as that. They will love you, Rory—and oh, Rory, it is too wonderful to think of. ”

“ But, Madeleine, be serious now. Do you really mean you could ever think of marrying me ? ”

“ No, not till you ask me, Rory. Hurry up ! Oh, Rory, you are so slow and I love you so. ” Like a wild thing she went dancing along, clinging to his arm.

“ Madeleine, will you be my wife ? ” said Rory desperately.

Immediately the dancing was over. The girl stood quietly looking up at him for a moment or two. Then slowly she put her arms round his neck and drew his face close to hers and whispered :

“ Yes, Rory, I will be your wife. I must, I love you so. ” She lay quivering with closed eyes in his arms a moment, her arms tight about his neck, her lips pressed hard upon his. “ Rory, you will always love me, no matter what comes ? ” she whispered.

“ While I live, I will love you, Madeleine, no matter what comes, ” he said solemnly.

The bell from the Basilica slowly tolled the midnight hour. He felt her shudder in his arms.

“ What is it, darling ? ” he asked.

“ The bell, Rory. What does it mean ? War ? Death ? Oh, I am afraid. ” She clung to him convulsively.

"No, Madeleine. It means a New Day and a better day, please God. A wonderful day. Our day."

Hand in hand they walked up the dark, narrow street, facing the New Day with the courage in their hearts born of a great love.

CHAPTER XII

THE following morning Red Rory found an orderly from General Brock waiting him at the fortifications.

"The General wishes to see you at your earliest leisure," said the orderly. "Also it may take a day."

Turning over the work to André, Red Rory went at once to the General's office in the Château St. Louis.

Seated at a table covered with maps were General Brock and an officer.

"Oh, here you are, Fraser. Thank you for your prompt attention. Colonel Kempt, this is the man I told you of. Trapper, voyageur, sailor, a man for your work, I believe."

Colonel Kempt nodded to Red Rory.

"Do you know the Richelieu country?"

"I have trapped in parts of it and have hunted most of it. But not for some time. The hunting is not so good the last two years."

"Ah, hunted out?"

"No, too many traders. Too much traffic."

"Can you build roads?"

"For toboggan? Yes. For horse traffic? I have made roads for lumbering."

"Can you run a surveyor's line?"

"No."

"Can you run a line for a trail, say across a portage or round a muskeg?"

"Yes."

"Can you boss a gang of men?"

"Depends on the men. My own men? Yes."

"I want a preliminary survey for cross-roads between the St. Lawrence and the Richelieu with a description of ground-rock, muskeg, swamp, heavy timber—distances between water-ways and that sort of thing. Could you get this for me?"

"Yes."

"How long would you take?"

"Depends on the number of roads, what distance, what kind of country."

"Quite true, quite true. My fault. What can you do a day?"

"No man can answer that question, sir. Perhaps ten miles, perhaps a hundred."

"A hundred?"

"Yes. On a good trail and when necessity drives."

"And have you done a hundred miles in a day?"

"Yes. From dark till dark to bring a doctor."

"He'll do," said Colonel Kempt to the General.

"How soon can you get away?"

"Impossible to leave here for two months. The work we have in hand will demand all that time."

Colonel Kempt glanced at the General.

"With your captains in charge could you get away for, say, a week or ten days?"

Red Rory pondered a few moments. "Yes, for a week," he replied.

"When can you start?" asked Colonel Kempt.

"He will start when you give the word," said the General. "That's the kind of man he is."

"To-morrow morning?" asked Colonel Kempt with an ironic smile.

"This afternoon," said Red Rory, a little nettled at the smile.

"Good! I can't be ready for you for a few days, however."

"Do I go alone or with a party? Do I report fully or

only distances and route?" asked Red Rory, with a half-sullen look on his face.

"That, too, we will discuss, Fraser," said the General kindly. "We will give you plenty of warning. Meantime we shall need you to plan and consult with us every night this week from, say, eight o'clock."

At the noon hour Red Rory went to Simon Fraser. He found Simon, his son and Jason Appleby in the office, busy discussing American trade. Hector was keen for development, and all the more in view of the threatened war. Simon was for retrenchment.

"What do you think, Rory?" said Simon, when he had explained the situation.

"If it is a cash basis or straight barter, I would say push all you can. You won't have a chance long."

"You think it will be soon," said Simon. "Any special reason?"

"Yes, our people are beginning to build roads," he answered, and could have bitten out his tongue.

"Building roads, eh?" said Hector eagerly. "Where?"

"There is nothing definite yet," said Red Rory cautiously.

"What kind of roads? Toboggan trails or horse roads?" said Jason, his dark face keenly alert.

"Oh, they are very indefinite," said Red Rory carelessly. "I shall be wanting some more provisions, peas and beans and soup meat."

"What part of the country will the road building be in?" asked Jason Appleby. "Towards Upper Canada, I suppose."

"That I cannot tell you," said Red Rory with a shrug of his shoulders. "I heard only a very little."

"Come and look at these provisions," said Simon, taking Red Rory with him down to the cellar.

"That boy is nobody's fool," said Jason, when Red Rory had departed with Simon to the cellar. "Any

chance of getting him? He is keen about the American young lady."

"Miss Van Rancken? Oh, nonsense! A habitant trapper! Would she look at him? Preposterous!" Hector's scorn knew no limit.

"You don't know our people, young man. Of course those old Dutch padrones are mighty proud themselves. But—oh, well—there is no caste with us, except in the South."

Hector ridiculed the suggestion.

"Is there any way of getting him? Any approach?" asked Jason.

"None. He is a race-proud fool. Highland Scot and all that. Two years in Edinburgh with his father's people and in the Fraser country did for him."

"You were there too, Hector, with your people."

"Yes. Damn them. I hated the lot of them. And I hate the lot of them here."

"They didn't like you much, eh? Guess you didn't suit them," said Jason with a laugh.

"Oh, over there they were too pious. And here they treated me like a dog. A dirty land-grabber wanted the job which had been given me, and that cursed Secretary, Ryland, had me turned out."

"Why? Any irregularity?"

"Irregularity? What do you mean?" inquired Hector haughtily.

"Oh, nothing wrong, or crooked—but you are a business man and not an office clerk, you know."

"The reason was, my mother is a Roman Catholic, a French woman and a lady. That group are English Protestant canaille." Hector's usually serene face was distorted with rage. "They insulted her. Those filthy camp-followers!"

"And this young man—he is your cousin?"

"Cousin? Scottish cousin. No, he is nothing to me. A coureur de bois—but nothing of this to my father.—Well, did you get your stuff?"

"Most of it," said Red Rory on his way to the door.

"You will be up to-night?" said Simon.

"I fear not. I shall be busy."

"Busy? You can't work at night. Don't forget we expect you to-night," said Hector.

"No, but——"

"Come up, Rory, when your work is done," said Simon. "We shall be going on till midnight."

"Perhaps I may," said Red Rory, and nodding a farewell he went on his way.

It was well on towards midnight, however, when Red Rory appeared in Madame Fraser's drawing-room.

What arrested Red Rory's attention as he entered the room was the dark, eager face of Jason Appleby leaning in rapt attention towards Miss Héloïse Fraser. Without announcement by the maid he slipped into the room, and moving quietly across the room came up behind Madame Fraser's chair and there stood silent till Héloïse had concluded the tragic tale of the last voyage of the gallant explorer, *Sieur de La Salle*.

"Say! What a tale! What a man!" cried Jason Appleby. "And what a story-teller!" He glanced at his watch. "Young lady, do you know how long you have been holding us here? An hour! I thought it was twenty minutes! But what a history! You lucky people! Just think! And that is only one of a score of such tales!"

"No! There is but one *La Salle*, my friend," said Madame Fraser.

"But, mamma, what of all the great explorers, whose names are enshrined in the history of New France, from *Cartier* to *Montcalm*?"

"Ah, yes!" cried Madame Fraser. "But only one *La Salle*! Ah, the splendid, the invincible courage! The unselfish devotion, the indomitable spirit of the man in the face of defeat, poverty, treachery, sickness, desertion. Ah, *mon Dieu*! What a soul! What *esprit*!

And the tragic end of him ! Ah, there is no so great story in all the stories of New France ! Ah, mon cousin Roree, what say you ? ”

“ Champlain ! ” said Rory, as he took her hand, bowing low. “ And Frontenac ! Not so colourful, but equally heroic and more splendid in result. ”

For another hour they discussed the early history of their country with all its tragic, futile splendour.

“ Great Jupiter ! ” exclaimed Jason as the party broke up. “ What a history. Do you know, I have never heard anything of this ? Miss Héloïse, you are wonderful, wonderful. May I come every night that I am in this town ? ”

“ But most certainly ! ” cried Madame. “ Héloïse has all the stories, the most glorious of our history. ”

“ It is a habitant art, ” said Hector, with a grin at his sister. “ You will find it practised in the winter evenings in every habitant home. ”

“ Hush, silly boy ! Héloïse is no habitant. She is of La belle France. Of the Salon of the Académie. She has the art, the dramatic, the divine art of making history into life. Alas, if she had only the physique, ma pauvre petite. ”

“ Tut, tut, mamma. I walked up the long steps to-day. ”

“ Méchante ! But the stories ! Yes, come and hear them, M. Appleby. They will make you understand the French Canadian aspiration. ”

“ Right you are, maman ! ” exclaimed Hector. “ You have the word. The glorious history of New France explains the aspiration of the conquered and oppressed Canadians of to-day. ”

“ The history of New France is one long tragedy. A story for tears and bitter shame and anguished regret from first to last, from Cartier to Montcalm ! Ah, mon Dieu ! Montcalm ! I knew him. I loved him, a gallant and noble gentleman of France, a brave soldier, an incomparable general, who even at the last might have met a

nobler fate but for the jealous vanity of the incompetent Vaudreuil and the greedy treachery of the unspeakable Bigot."

A deep silence fell upon the company as the old actress, with arm outstretched, eyes flashing through tears and cheeks aflame, rolled forth those words in tones of vibrant, heart-thrilling, melodious power.

To her side moved swiftly her son, Hector, caught her hand in his, pressed it to his lips.

"Ma chère maman," he murmured brokenly. "Je t'adore ! Tu es très magnifique !"

A great rush of tears came to her eyes as she laughingly took her son's face between her hands and kissed him on either cheek.

"You would make me a vain old woman," she said.

"Say ! Listen to me !" came the deliberate voice of Jason Appleby as he came and stood before Madame. "If I was a French Canadian with all that hot stuff in my blood, I would tear that flag from the citadel and plant in its place the flag of Canada. By God ! I would, or die in the attempt."

"Hurrah !" cried Hector. "Vive le Canada !"

"There will be many who have tried to pull that flag down, but have failed in the attempt." Simon Fraser's dry tones struck them like a blast from the chill night air outside.

"I know some who did not fail, sir," said Jason, turning swiftly upon the old gentleman.

"You are not suggesting, Mr. Appleby, that the hands that pulled down that flag from the Washington flag-pole were American hands."

It was Josette that had moved into the circle surrounding Madame Fraser, the pale ivory of her face in its oval frame of blue-black hair touched with two points of scarlet.

"American hands?" Jason whirled upon her. "You just bet they were American hands !" he snapped.

"Yes, and with them the hands of men from France and

from almost every country in Europe, not to speak of the thousands of hands from Britain itself."

"Ye have the word, lass! The Lord be praised! Ye have the word!" came Simon Fraser's guttural, harsh and profound.

For the life of him Jason could find no immediate word of reply.

"Not quite the word, Cousin Simon." Into the circle moved Red Rory, and beside him Madeleine stood alone, making the circle complete.

"The hands that pulled down the Union Jack from the Washington flag-pole were the hands of Americans, but about these Americans stood men from France, and in their rear and on their flanks men from other European nations and, as Josette says, men from within Britain itself were clutching at Britain's hands, so that she could not get in her blow."

"Hold on, Cousin Rory," came the quiet voice of Héloïse. "The Americans won their fight because their cause was right."

"I agree," said Red Rory. "Their cause was right. They were bound to win."

He felt a hand slip within his arm and give him a quick little squeeze.

"Well," drawled Jason, "I guess maybe we've got the thing straightened out as far as the U.S. is concerned. I'm not going to say we did the thing alone. But we did it. The question is, what about Canada?"

"What about Canada? There is no Stamp Act in Canada," said Red Rory with a smile.

"No, but there is an Executive Council," said Hector.

"Hector, my son, we will have nothing of that," said his mother quietly. "You are speaking foolish things. Your father and your mother do not wish you to speak any more about this. No, no, friends. It is all folly. It is wicked folly, M. Jason. We are for Canada and for Scotland too, n'est-ce pas, Simon? Eh, Josette? Roree?"

"Yes, that will do, my dear," said Simon. "For Canada and for Scotland."

"And now no more politics in this house, M. Jason. Come and dance, come and listen to the stories from Héloïse, but no more war, no more politics. And now for some supper."

"Take me, Rory," whispered Madeleine, clinging to his arm. "Don't let Hector get me. He is—he is—a little difficult."

"I want you, God knows. I may be leaving town any day, perhaps to-morrow."

"Cousin Roree, will you give me your arm, please. Simon, you will escort Madeleine, the others arrange yourselves as you will."

"You will take me home, Rory?" said Madeleine in despair.

"I will arrange it somehow," he promised.

But, as on a previous occasion, it was due to the finesse of Héloïse that Rory was Madeleine's escort home that night after supper, in spite of Hector's masterful and dominating methods.

By devious turnings through the crooked streets, Rory escaped the rest of the company and found his opportunity to have his farewell with the girl he loved.

"It may be to-morrow that I shall have to go," he said to her as she clung to him.

"But where?"

He hesitated. "It is on Government business," he said. "It is for the General."

"Don't tell me if you should not," she replied.

"Oh, there is no reason why I should not tell you, but it is only for you, remember. It is down the Richelieu Valley."

"Oh, that is the way we go. Perhaps we can arrange that we meet somewhere."

"I have been thinking that," said Rory. "But of course my work, my duty will come first."

"First? Before me, Rory?" she gasped. Then she

said quickly, "But of course, darling. With you it will always be your duty first. That is why I love you." There was no opportunity for anything but a brief leave-taking, for, by an evil fortune, close behind them as they neared the door came Max with Hector and Jason Appleby, loudly discussing.

One long kiss, a passionate clinging embrace, their last for many months, and the door closed between them.

CHAPTER XIII

"HE will not make it to-night, General. The going is hard for moccasined feet on those roads."

"Had I known his route, I would have sent a carriage to meet him. But the young man will arrive to-night. He has a strange habit of keeping his word, Colonel. He has impressed himself upon my imagination. His Excellency, too, is of my opinion, ever since the famous horse-race."

"Horse-race, your Excellency? I was not aware you went in for that sport."

"No, Kempt. I do not as a rule, but the General was so keen over this young protégé and a wonderful mare of his, that—well, I ventured a bit—did not so badly—a hundred or so. So did the General. We were all very lucky. The young man had the air of a winner. And certainly he has done excellent work for you, General. He has a remarkable power over these habitants. You ought to make an officer of him, General. He would knock a battalion of those chaps into shape if any man could."

"With your permission I will give him a commission and let him organize a working battalion at once."

"I agree. Let it be done. But I must get away to my bed. These are very trying days."

"Your Excellency must certainly be terribly worried with the present situation."

"You have read that rag, Kempt, 'Le Canadien'?"

"Abominable, outrageous. The man ought to be severely dealt with." Colonel Kempt was furious.

"It is very annoying," said General Brock. "But I doubt if the sheet carries much weight in the country."

"He is backed by men like Panet and Taschereau," said the Governor. "The thing is very serious. And may be disastrous in case of war. What could we do? Would that House of Assembly grant any funds for military expenditure? Would they authorize enlistment? Not a penny, not a man. No, General, the thing is exceedingly grave. I have a duty to perform. I have sent a personal warning to the editor, Bédard, that another utterance such as his last scandalous editorial will lay him open to arrest. Personal insults I ignore, but the inciting of this people to oppose my Council, in the exercise of its functions, is treason. That I will not tolerate."

"Quite right too," said Colonel Kempt. "The man is a traitor. Must be."

"No, Colonel. I do not regard Bédard as a traitor. He is hot-headed. He is reckless in speech. But I do not consider him disloyal. Certainly he has no affection for our friends over the border."

"He is doing his utmost to undermine the authority of my Government," said the Governor. "That I consider treason, and treason I will not allow. Not for a day. I have been too patient. However, I have sent M. Bédard his last warning."

"You wrote him a formal letter to that effect?" asked Brock with some anxiety.

"I wrote a note—a formal command—and sent it by the hand of my Secretary."

"Ah! By Mr. Ryland." The General's tone seemed to annoy Sir James.

"Yes, by Mr. Ryland. A most faithful, able, diligent servant of the Council, as well as my own most devoted

and loyal secretary. He is not liked by these people, but he is an able Secretary of Council."

"No, he is not liked. It is a pity," said the General, with the grave deliberation he always employed when giving a considered opinion. "Personality is a very great element in diplomacy."

"Diplomacy?" shouted Sir James, springing to his feet and beginning to pace up and down the office. "Is this a time or an occasion for diplomacy?"

"Your Excellency is right. My word was unfortunate. I entirely agree with you. But may I suggest that it is possible to arouse unnecessary animus and friction by the employment of an agent who is *persona non grata*. They do hate him, your Excellency, like the very Devil. And indeed, though he is undoubtedly a very loyal chap and all that, still—well, let me give you an instance." And the General proceeded to relate an incident in which Secretary Ryland had run foul of a very fat and very excitable habitant on a very slippery and very sloping street with disastrous results to both. The situation created was exceedingly funny and was told in a style so thoroughly humorous that the Governor became well-nigh hysterical with laughter. The tension of the moment was over. The Secretary's virtues and vices were forgotten. The Governor was restored to his wonted good-humour with his Commander-in-Chief.

"Brock, you have a gift that is priceless. Would to God I had your eye for the humorous side of life."

"A laugh is a great medicine. But this is getting past the humorous stage. It is now within half an hour of midnight. You should be in your bed, Sir James. Let me order up some refreshments before you go."

"Thank you, no. I take— Hello! Your man, General, I fancy."

An orderly had come in followed by a *coureur de bois*, leg-weary and foot-sore, his face black and peeled with frost and sun, but in his sunken eyes a fire still burned and his voice rang out clear and strong.

"Your report, sir," he said, laying a packet rolled in deer-skin upon the table.

"By Jove! He's done it, General," cried the Governor in great excitement. "It wants a quarter of the hour. Give me your hand, my lad."

"When and where did you eat last, Fraser?" inquired the General after he and Colonel Kempt had shaken hands with Red Rory.

"At St. Anne, sir, about two."

"Fifty miles, begad!" said Kempt. "And ten hours of a go."

The General touched a bell, an orderly appeared. "Bring some refreshments at once," he said, "and have supper prepared for Mr. Fraser. Something substantial."

They sat for an hour reading, examining, discussing Red Rory's report.

In six weeks, with the aid of Polydore and another man who had acted as cook, he had cut a network of trails between the Richelieu and the St. Lawrence, crossing and recrossing the Montreal and Chateauguay rivers at possible fords. He had paced distances, blazed portages round rapids and made all necessary preparations for road-building gangs to go in and finish the work when the snow had gone from the woods.

"This is a marvellous bit of work, General," said Kempt. "I know something of this kind of thing. I want this man for my road- and bridge-building boss."

"Sorry, Kempt. I need him for myself. I'll lend him to you for a few weeks when spring comes."

"Well, if you can't do better for me, that will have to do. I say, look at the boy." Rory had fallen across the supper-table and was fast asleep.

"Played out, poor chap," said the General. "Ready for bed, Fraser?" he said, touching his arm.

With a single movement, at the first touch of the General's fingers, Red Rory was on his feet and on guard. It was the hunter's instinct and habit.

"To-morrow, we will go into this report, Fraser. You will sleep in till noon, I suppose."

"No, sir. I shall be at the works in the morning."

"Come here, then, at noon. We will get to work at these roads in the spring."

"No, sir. There is not a day to be lost. To-morrow a gang of men should start getting material ready before break-up. To-morrow, sir."

"By Jove, he is right, General."

"Come to-morrow at two to this office. And don't move out of your room before noon. This is an order. Do you understand?" The General's voice was very stern.

"Yes, sir. Good night, sir," said Red Rory, and stumbled off towards his hotel.

He was numb with weariness, but, worse, he was sick from loneliness. He resolved to look in upon Simon Fraser. He had been for six weeks in the Richelieu country, for the most part in the woods, but now and then coming out to civilization for supplies. He had written to Madeleine but had received no reply. He was heart-sick with longing for some word from her. There might be some word at Simon Fraser's.

It was long after midnight when he entered the big, kindly, homely sitting-room, to find a quiet group of the old friends about the big blazing fire.

"Roree!" cried Madame Fraser. "Mon cher Roree! Ten thousand welcomes!" She threw her arms about his neck and kissed him once, twice, thrice. "That is for me and for your mother whom you are longing to see."

"How did you know what I wanted," said Rory to her in a low tone. "Oh, it is good to see you."

They all crowded about him with warm greetings. Simon himself, Hector, Miss Christine who was visiting the Frasers, Josette and a new face in that home, Alain.

"And where is——" His eyes wandered over the room.

"Héloïse?" said Madame. "Where is Héloïse? Does anyone know?"

"Here I am, mamma. What is the excitement?" cried Héloïse, coming out from the drawing-room followed by Jason Appleby. "Oh, it is our dear Cousin Rory." She came running to him with arms outstretched in welcome. "How wonderful to see you! And Jason will be so glad too." Her face was radiant. Red Rory gazed at her in astonishment. The girl was beautiful with a new loveliness. And with her Jason? What did this mean?

"Here I am," said Jason, shaking him warmly by the hand. "But I have not been here ever since your departure."

"He just came yesterday," said Héloïse. Under Red Rory's puzzled gaze a deep red came into her cheeks. He could not understand. There was a new atmosphere in the Fraser home. Jason? Héloïse? And there was Alain, too, wild with delight at seeing him, but yet with a certain restraint about him, evidently on the very best terms with Hector. And Hector, hearty in his greeting and yet somehow forced in his cordiality, and even in Simon a sense of uneasiness. Madame Fraser alone was her own frank, kindly self. Red Rory set himself down by her side.

"I am ashamed to come in like this," he began. "I am fresh off the trail, but I could not go to sleep till I had seen you."

"But what a real proof of love!" cried Madame Fraser, patting his hand as if he were a child. "But have you dined? Simon, the boy is just from the trail! Some refreshment! And, Héloïse, some supper."

But Red Rory made explanation. He had gone to make his report. He had dined. He was on his way to bed. He must go immediately.

"And how far have you come to-day?" asked Simon.

"From this end of Lac St. Pierre."

"Did you have a good team? I do hope so," cried Madame anxiously.

"No! I could not be bothered with horses. I came on shanks' mare."

"What! Lac St. Pierre? Beyond St. Anne?" said Simon. "Boy, that is more than one hundred miles. You ran?"

"Yes, we dined at St. Anne at noon."

"We? Who?"

"Polydore Hammel. He remained at St. Anne with a cousin. We dined there. A wonderful dinner."

"Rory, tell me, when did you set out this morning?" Simon's voice was that of a judge on the bench.

"Well, pretty early," said Rory with a laugh.

"When?"

"About two in the morning. You see, I had sent word that I would be back to-day. They would be waiting my report—and we had bad luck on the way—and——"

"Simon Fraser, take this boy to his room," said his wife, her lips trembling. "No, not a word from any of you. Away! Good night, you foolish, bad, wicked boy. Go, go." She pushed him away towards the door.

"But I am not sleepy now. I was an hour ago. And I want to see you more than to sleep—and I want news—about—about—everything and everybody," said Red Rory, laughingly resisting her.

"Well, half an hour, you wonderful boy. One hundred miles and more because you promised," said Madame. "Sit by me."

"More fool you, Cousin Rory. To-morrow would have done," said Hector.

"No!" burst from Alain's lips. "Not for Rory. He is——"

Rory's fingers closed on the boy's leg.

"Ouch!" he cried. "But it is—ouch! I say! Rory!"

"Let us have news," said Rory.

"Let me begin," cried Christine. "My brother Tom is coming home. He is exchanging into a Newfoundland regiment and then—bah! He may become a farmer."

"Splendid to have him home—for your mother!" said Rory.

"Jason is trading most diligently with Simon Fraser," added Christine, with a grin at Héloïse. "Reports regularly to headquarters."

"And making good at it too," said Hector.

"And having a good time," added Jason.

"Max Van Rancken is also becoming a trader," said Madame Fraser.

"And doing well too," added her husband, pinching Josette's ear.

Josette blushed furiously, angrily, Rory thought.

"And Madeleine is very busy organizing her father and her uncle, Colonel Van Rensselaer, and her family circle and friends into an anti-war society," said Héloïse.

"And not making much of it," said Hector.

"Don't believe him. Her father and her uncle are both strong for peace," said Héloïse.

"Not by what I could judge."

Red Rory would have given his ears for some further word of Madeleine's doings, but from Hector he would not, could not ask.

"And she is coming to us in the summer," cried Héloïse exultantly.

Red Rory kept his eyes upon the further wall, waiting.

"Who can tell about next summer?" said Hector half sullenly.

"Oh, we are going to be very gay next summer. The Gores from Upper Canada are to be down on their way to England," said Héloïse. "And Madeleine is coming, and Max too," she added, with a wicked glance at Josette.

"Don't keep the boy," said Madame Fraser. "Simon will take you to your room, where you will remain till the hour of midday." She would allow no delay, but bundled him off without ceremony.

"This is my room when it suits my affairs and I do not wish to disturb Madame," said Simon, ushering him into a small bedroom, plainly, almost shabbily furnished,

but with a blazing fire, a case of books and a writing-table.

"I am glad to see you, Rory. Man, I am glad to be seeing you once more." There was a note of anxiety, of sadness in his voice. Red Rory glanced at his face. It was deeply lined and haggard. "Ay, ye may look, lad. I am not sleeping well. No! I will say nothing the night. But I will just say, 'to the bottomless pit with all Americans.' No, not all. Yon's a fine lass. Yon lass of yours, I mean."

"Of mine?" said Rory, the red blood showing in his burnt cheeks.

"Oh, yes, lad, and the young man is a fine lad as well. But yon sailor man. Rory, I am being afraid of yon man. He has captured the household. The Madame is not difficult, nor is Hector, the foolish fellow. But Héloïse—with the brains of her, and the cleverness of her. She is daft about him. And he is mad about her stories and her music and her clever tongue in the politics. Who is he? And what is he, Rory? I have had my agents on him. But they can get little about him. His father was a senior officer in the navy, killed on board the 'Chesapeake,' you remember, some four years ago—that very unfortunate affair, indeed a very rash affair for us I will say. The lad has been up and down the coast for the last ten years. He has captured them all. But what is he after?" Simon was deeply distressed.

"But Héloïse? Surely she can see through him."

"See through him? Man, that is just it. He is mad about her. See through him, she can. He is fair crazy."

"He is sincere in that? He really loves her?"

"Ay, he does. And that makes it difficult."

"And what of Héloïse?"

"That I cannot say. She has a deep heart and a tender heart." Simon's voice trembled. "And the man has fascinated her. He has a way with him, I will say. But—oh, I am sick at heart. What is he doing with Hector—and with Alain?"

"Alain? That child. Absurd!"

"Child, and man too. The students have turned his head. He has a gift of the gab they tell me and is wild about that young Papineau. There's a man coming, Rory. I heard him the other night."

Rory nodded.

"But, hark! Yon's Madame. She will be pulling my ears." He opened the door. "Yes, my dear, I am coming at once. Good night, Rory. Man, I am glad you are back. I am relying upon you, Rory. Indeed there is no one else. Yes, yes, I am coming. Good night, lad." His hard and gnarled hand crushed Rory's in a good-night grip and he hurried downstairs to his spouse.

Sleepy as he was and half dead with weariness, Red Rory sat an hour before the fire. He had abundant food for thought. And for anxious thought.

He undressed, blew out his candle and lay looking at the flickering fire. In the glowing embers he saw pictures of a face that rarely left him waking or dreaming, a face in an aureole of gold hair and illumined with eyes of wonderful blue. She was coming in summer. He began counting the days, and so counting fell into dreaming, but it was long past midday when the sun, beating on his face, woke him.

CHAPTER XIV

FROM his dreaming Red Rory wakened with a start. Someone was prowling about his camp. He leaped from his bed ready for action.

"Mon, but ye're a suddint chiel." It was Airdrie, Simon Fraser's book-keeper and factotum.

"Hello, Airdrie, it's you."

"Ay, it's me, and here's ye're clothes and such," replied Airdrie, opening a bag and laying out upon a couch Red Rory's better suit. "An' here's ye're shavin'

things, an' I'm bringing ye a tub. The maister says ye're needin' it. I dinna ken hoo he cud ken unless by the smell o' ye." Airdrie sniffed with wrinkled nose.

"By jinks, you are right. I am a perfect pig. And the window was shut last night. I couldn't get it open. Frozen, I guess."

"Get it open? Man, wad ye be freezin' ye're sel' to deith? Na, na, ye canna open a windie in this room. I seed tae that. But ye'll need to mak' haste."

"What's the hour, Airdrie?"

"Half an hour an' the dinner-bell will ring. I'm bringin' ye're tub. Ye'll need tae haste. The deil's abroad outside."

"What's the matter, Airdrie?"

"Riot an' revolution and no less!" said Airdrie, closing the door behind him.

Soon he returned carrying a huge wash-tub which he proceeded to fill with hot water.

"Hello, hot water, Airdrie? You're a brick. By George, a hot bath is the real thing after a long trip."

"Ay, there's some that likes it and needs it as well. As for me, I just wait for the warm weather." Airdrie's tone of high contempt for such as needed frequent baths, except in the bathing season, Red Rory accepted with fitting meekness as he began to luxuriate in the suds of warm snow water and yellow home-made soap.

"The Madame was for some of her finicky, scented French soaps. But I kenned better what ye needed."

"Quite right, Airdrie."

"Ye'll no be late. The maister is in an awfu' swither. Gie yersel' a lick an' a scrape. The rest can wait."

Whatever method Red Rory adopted, he was able to appear punctually in the presence of Madame Fraser and the company with his visible parts a shining rich walnut brown and dressed in his best blue home-spun of grey-blue cloth of his mother's own weaving.

"Why, how splendid you look", cried Miss Christine, "in your fine blue suit. It is quite splendid."

"Is it? My mother made it," said Red Rory, quite pleased.

"Your mother?" cried Madame.

"All of it. 'From back to back' as we say."

"And what does that signify?"

"From the sheep's back to mine," laughed Red Rory.

"Tell me! What do you mean?" asked Madame, amazed.

"It means, dear Madame Fraser," said Christine, "that this boy's clever little mother took the wool in the fleece, washed it, carded it, spun it, dyed it, wove it into cloth with a mixture of linen spun from the flax grown in their own field and fashioned it from the pattern of one of the Seigneur Fraser's old suits with due allowance for difference in size, and produced what you behold."

"Mon Dieu!" cried Madame Fraser. "Come here, Roree, and let me see!" She turned him about, examining the material and fashioning of his blue suit. "Mais! C'est magnifique! My dear Roree, do you thank le bon Dieu for your wonderful mother often?" said Madame earnestly.

"Every day, Madame. There is no one like my mother," said Rory, a soft glow in his eyes.

"And that is the truth," said Josette, her dark eyes shining.

"Dinner, madame!" announced the little maid, Annette.

"Come, if you please, we are somewhat hurried," said Simon.

"What is it, Simon? You are disturbed?"

"The whole town is in a ferment. I don't want any of you to go on the streets this afternoon."

Her husband's face was to Madame Fraser an open book. She therefore waited his next word without questioning.

"'Le Canadien' is on the rampage again," he said.

"'Riot and revolution,' Airdrie says," said Red Rory with a light laugh.

At this point Hector entered the room and took his place at the table.

"Riot and revolution?" he cried in a voice of suppressed excitement. "Airdrie is usually an ass, but this time he may, like Baalam's, be speaking God's truth."

"Do not be irreverent," said Simon sternly.

"I did not mean to be irreverent, sir. I am simply stating what I believe to be God's truth. And that is, that riot and revolution may not be so far away."

Red Rory laughed aloud. "I have heard better jokes," he said.

"If you had seen what I have just seen you might not see the joke," said Hector angrily.

"And what is that, Hector?" asked his mother.

"I have just seen a file of soldiers march down to the office of 'Le Canadien' and carry off to prison M. Bédard and his printer. Also I got, from the officer, the information that there is a wholesale arrest of members of the House of Assembly, among them men like M. Taschereau and M. Blanchet. The people are wild. At any moment they may attack the Château St. Louis itself."

Again Red Rory laughed aloud.

"May I ask what you are laughing at?" said Hector.

"At the supreme folly of what you are saying," said Red Rory, in a quiet, cool voice.

"Folly? And why? Remember the Bastille."

"You forget one man?"

"Sir James is a bigoted fool!"

"I wasn't thinking of Sir James."

"Not Sir James?"

"No, Isaac Brock."

"My God, lad, you have it," said Simon Fraser. "I had forgotten him myself for a moment. I was thinking of the members of the Council, of yon Secretary buddie,

yes, and of the Governor, poor fellow—he is very ill indeed. But Brock? Ah!” He laughed a little laugh of relief. “Ay, lad, there will be no revolution and no riot either, at least that will last over one night. No! Hector, not a word more at this table! Brock! My mind is at rest. Shall we have the next course, my dear?”

There was no further talk of riot and revolution. Hector sat silent, wrathful, but with an excited look in his eye. He excused himself before dessert and left the room. Rory followed him with an apology to Madame Fraser and the party.

“Wait, Hector,” he said, as the young man was passing out of the hall. “I really was not making fun of you, Hector,” he continued. “But when I think of Brock and a company of his regulars—just one company—revolution really seemed a joke.”

“A joke? Yes, to-day and in Quebec. But remember there are three hundred thousand French in this country.”

“Yes, men, women and children. Don’t be silly.”

“Not to speak of eight million revolutionists not far away, every one hostile to the tyranny of a Government like ours.”

“Hector, don’t be silly. You don’t know Brock. With one single company he can hold this city in the hollow of his hand.”

“You don’t know everything that has been going on, my boy, these last six weeks,” said Hector.

“What?”

“I would like to tell you, but——” Hector closed his lips.

They passed through the store into the street. A raging, yelling mob, foaming its fury, was milling in the loose melting snow. Here and there upon a high-piled drift an orator with arms tossing was declaiming to the cheering mob.

“Better put up these shutters, Hector,” said Red Rory, setting about the work. A man came running past

yelling like a madman. "Alphonse!" cried Red Rory. "Alphonse Rondeau! Ici!"

The man paused, glanced wildly about, caught sight of Red Rory and came to him panting heavily.

"Bonjour, Alphonse," said Red Rory, taking his hand and beginning to squeeze.

"Bonjour, Roree," he yelled in an excited voice. "Oh—a-a-a-h! Arrêtez, mon capitaine, il fait peine!"

"Yes! Listen to me or I shall bring blood."

"But yes, I am. Sac-r-r-ré nom, M. Roree! Assez bien!"

"Stand still and listen then. Why are you not at work?"

"Les soldats! Ces sacrés soldats! Ouch! Mon Dieu, Roree!"

"Listen and speak quietly—stop dancing!" said Red Rory. "Where are the others?"

The man flung out his arm wildly in the general direction of the city. "Voilà! Toutes les places!"

"Come with me!" said Red Rory. "Good-bye, Hector. This is neither revolution nor riot. A lot of silly children. You watch me. You have a horse in your stable behind here. I am going to get him."

Hector nodded.

At a quick walk, followed by Alphonse, he made his way to Simon Fraser's stables near. In a few minutes he appeared riding into the crowd.

"Malbaie!" he cried, waving his cap above his head. "Malbaie à moi."

By twos and by threes men came running to him from all sides.

"A grand supper and dance to-night, at half-past five. Tickets at the fortifications within the next half-hour. Don't be late. Hello, Théophile! Where are your men of Baie St. Paul? Do they not love a supper and dance?"

"Holà!" yelled Théophile. "Baie St. Paul, suivez-moi!"

Gradually a considerable band of men from Malbaie and Baie St. Paul fell in behind Red Rory.

"Strike up, 'Narcisse,' old Malbrouck!" His men, delighted to welcome Rory back after his six weeks' absence, fell in behind the procession as it pushed its way through the excitable mob.

"Hi there! Alain!" cried Red Rory, catching sight of the boy in the middle of a group of excited students to whom young Papineau was holding forth with much passionate gesticulating.

"Good boy, Papineau!" cried Rory, halting his horse beside the handsome young orator.

"Ah, it is you," cried young Papineau. "You are with us for justice, freedom, eh?"

"Most certainly!" said Red Rory with a laugh. "And you will be with us to-night at supper in our big warehouse, eh? Good eating with a bottle of wine to wash it down, some chansons and some oratory. You understand?"

"What? Ah, certainly. When?" cried Papineau.

"Half-past five. Alain, you will bring M. Papineau and any of your friends. They are all my friends too, you know," said Red Rory with a knowing shrug of his shoulders.

"You may expect a dozen of us or more, M. Roree," said Papineau, delighted.

"The more the better," said Red Rory. "En avant! Allons!" Striking up another of the rollicking chansons he rode off, waving his men to follow. From street to street of the Lower Town the procession marched along, sweeping up with it every man from Malbaie and Baie St. Paul who under the excitement of the mob had determined to make a half-holiday of it. Such was Red Rory's popularity with his men.

So infectious was the rhythmic swing of the marching song and so eagerly curious were they as to the proposed supper, that when Red Rory halted at the fortifications an almost complete roster answered Alain's roll-call.

"Glad to see you all again," said Red Rory, waving his hand to them. "We will meet at supper. Ha, André!" He shook hands warmly with his captain.

"Mon Dieu! Roree! I was in despair. Some strange madness seized them. They would not come to work. The Devil himself is working in them."

"All right, André. Big supper and dance in our barracks to-night. Send down some men to prepare. Alain will help you. Get what you want from Cousin Simon, Alain. Let us have a good supper. Good-bye! Cheer up, André!"

"I want to speak to you, Roree—Rory, I mean?" said Alain in a low voice.

"Not now, Alain. To-night perhaps. Get in a good supper, all the fiddles and tambourines and kettledrums you can get."

"All right, Rory, I will do my best." The boy's face was red with suppressed emotion.

"All right, old chap. Glad to see you again."

The boy sprang to his side, seized his hand and kissed it. "You know," he began in a choking voice.

"Get on with the job, old chap. You are all right," said Red Rory, patting him on the shoulder. "I must be off now to a meeting. I'll be back in an hour or so."

In this, however, Red Rory reckoned without his chief. The discussion in regard to the road building operations in the Richelieu Valley was short, sharp and to the point. Both General Brock and Colonel Kempt were men of few words. In almost a single sentence Colonel Kempt stated his scheme of road building for the Richelieu Valley, from Chambley to the border and extending across the Montreal and Chateauguay rivers to the St. Lawrence.

Red Rory studied the plan long and carefully. His face showed perplexity and doubt.

"Well, spit it out," said Kempt, reading his face.

"I am no military expert," said Rory.

"What do you see, Fraser?" said the General.

"Only this. If the main attack will be against Montreal and up the Richelieu, all those cross-roads are built so as to help the invader. The angles from Plattsburg—they are laying out a camp there now——"

"Where is Plattsburg?" asked Kempt.

"Here," said Red Rory, putting his finger on the west shore of Lake Champlain some twenty-five miles from the border.

"The angles from Plattsburg are all obtuse angles, the easiest for the invader to use and the hardest for us. Why have the cross-roads to Montreal at all? And why make the angles easy for the enemy?"

"Quite right, Fraser. The only answer is that I believe the main attack will be down the St. Lawrence, and the junction from Plattsburg will be further west on Lake St. Francis. In which case if we are driven from the Richelieu forts, La Colle, St. John, St. Louis, Chambley, our forces could converge upon Montreal for its defence."

"I see," said Red Rory quickly. "Then how about a series of cross trails, not roads, trails from the Richelieu to these cross-roads with ambushed camps to flank an attacking force?"

The General glanced at Kempt.

"By Jove, Kempt, if the main attack is to be down the St. Lawrence the boy is right."

Kempt studied the map for a few minutes.

"He is right, by Jove. Cross trails let it be with the obtuse angles our way, eh? You say they are building a camp at Plattsburg?"

"They are laying out something that looks like a camp and building a road leading northward. I could find that out."

"I suggest, Kempt, a further exploration and, if he is right in this, a slight modification in our plans. Mean-time full steam ahead with supplies," said the General.

"When can you start?"

"In two days, or three if I can transfer my own ~~main~~ ^{main} force

men from the fortifications. They could be finished by local men now, sir, I think."

"I doubt it," said Kempt. "The Quebec populace do not appear to me, especially this morning, to be very dependable for anything constructive."

"Things look rather ominous, I must confess," said the General in a grave voice. "We shall know better in a few hours. Meantime it is the hour for Conference, Kempt. Better come with us, Fraser. Your report may be valuable. Sir James is quite indisposed this morning and the state of the city is not conducive to a quiet mind."

Talking as they went, they made their way to the Council Chamber, while Red Rory hurried down town to see that complete preparations had been made for the Grand Supper.

CHAPTER XV

THE supper for the men of Malbaie and Baie St. Paul was a great and glorious success and did for his men just what Red Rory had hoped it would.

Alain had taken full advantage of Red Rory's *carte blanche* in the way of supplies and had given full scope to his imagination in providing the food. Such eating, such drinking the men of Malbaie had never known. And to add to the hilarity of the occasion, just as the supper had got into full swing, who should appear, foot-sore, weary, burned black, triumphant, but Polydore Hammel. They gave him a vociferous welcome. They carried him to the place of honour at Rory's right hand.

The climax of hilarious joy was reached when Polydore, somewhat elevated by his mingled libations, rose to his feet and began to extol in bibulous oratory the wisdom, the courage, the greatness of their leader, Roree Rouge.

"He is a great man; the greatest man in Quebec; the greatest man in Canada. There is no one like Roree Rouge. And best of all he is one of us. He is a man of

Malbaie. He is habitant, of our blood. But he is no little habitant. He is a big man. He talks with big men. They come to ask his advice. Ah, mon Dieu, Roree Rouge, he is friends with the Governor! He is friends with the General, and he is friends with me too!"

The wild cheering of the men, the roll of the kettle-drums, the banging on the tables, made such a commotion that the door of the warehouse was cautiously opened and a soldier stepped in from the night outside. He was received with derisive and welcoming cheers.

"Come in, Corporal," cried Red Rory. "Give him a drink, André."

A dozen cups were offered to the Corporal from which, to the limit of his capacity, he drank. And then, assured that all was well, that no disloyal politics were being discussed or that evil plans against the Government devised, the soldier disappeared to his duty.

Before bringing the festivities to an end, Rory made announcement of the new programme of work in the Richelieu and called for volunteers. Immediately every man was on his feet, clamorous for enrolment.

"I will give you three days to go home. Bring your horses and sleighs if they are in good condition. On the fourth day we shall set out for the Richelieu. André McNab and Théophile Gagnon will still be your captains. From them you will take your orders. But, remember, on the fourth day we go."

The men shouted at him their promises.

"Now, Alain," said Rory, "you will come with me."

The boy sprang to his side. Together they walked to Rory's hotel, almost in silence. Once in Red Rory's room, Alain broke forth.

"Oh, Rory, I have been wanting to speak to you, to tell you it is a great thing." The boy was labouring under immense excitement.

"Yes?" said Rory quietly.

"A great thing for our country——" Alain was

making a desperate effort to speak calmly, as one man should speak to another about great things.

"Yes?" said Rory.

"This Government is impossible; it is tyrannous; it is repressive. What opportunity is there for a French Canadian in this Government? Behold, see——" The boy broke into the French language, which lent itself more easily to the fluidity of his thought.

"Oh, speak English, Alain," said Rory impatiently. "You are not habitant."

"A habitant," cried Alain. "Yes, a habitant, just like you! With a habitant heart, and a habitant indignation against this foreign government!"

"Come, Alain, don't talk nonsense," said Rory. "If that is all you have to say, I am busy."

"No, no, Rory, I must tell you. You have been away from the city. A great many things have taken place——" and the boy entered into a heated tirade against the Government, against the Council, against the "Scotch traders."

"Scotch traders?" said Rory. "What about Simon Fraser, anything wrong with him?"

"Simon Fraser? Oh, no. He is a good man, but he is with the Government. But look at the others! Look at those unspeakable magistrates, those ignorant judges, their injustice. Why, they encourage litigation so that they may levy their scandalous charges. Oh, sacré tonnerre! It is to weep! It is to go mad!"

"But come, Alain, speak English."

"No, no, my heart is too hot for English. Surely you feel your heart boil with indignation," cried the lad.

"My heart," said Rory with a little smile. "No, my heart beats very steadily, Alain. Now, boy, listen to me. You are sixteen."

"Seventeen," said Alain, "coming eighteen."

"Ah, I thought you had been sixteen. You are seventeen then, and you have been devoting yourself, I can see, to the study of rhetoric. Your ideal is that young Papi-

neau, a clever enough young man, but still a boy. And young Dussault and others——”

“But it is not Papineau,” Alain cried, in an outburst of passion. “It is not Dussault. It is no one, it is my country and my country’s wrongs.”

“Tut, tut!” said Rory with a slow smile. “Your country’s wrongs? Now, tell me about Hector.”

And the boy answered, “Hector—I don’t know——”

“Come, Alain, speak English.”

“No, I cannot understand Hector. He is English, no, Scotch I mean, and yet he is French. He is true Canadian. He hates this Government and he loves the Americans. This Jason is a great friend of his. And Hector is sure that the Americans are good friends of Canada and will help Canada to win its freedom. But that Jason, I do not understand him. He is a strange man. Oh, I am terribly mixed up.” The boy turned his distracted eyes full of misery upon his friend.

“Now, Alain, listen to me. I am not much older than you, but I have seen a good deal more of the world. I have studied these questions with some care. As for the Americans, you do not imagine that they are anxious to help Canada. You are not such a fool as that.”

“But Jason says France will help too.”

Rory laughed scornfully. “France! You trust France!”

“But I do not know what to think or do, Rory,” Alain said. “And now I must go.”

“And where are you going now?”

“Oh, there is a meeting.”

“And where is this meeting?”

The boy hesitated for a few moments. “Well, I can trust you,” he said. “You will hurt nobody. It is in the little stone warehouse.”

“What! In Simon Fraser’s warehouse?”

“Yes, Hector will be there.”

“All right,” said Rory. “Good-bye, Alain, remember that the only hope for Canada lies with Britain. And

Brock will not allow any nonsense. What he says goes."

By midnight Red Rory was too fagged to continue his work any longer. As he began to prepare for bed his mind went to Alain.

"I wonder just what fool business that boy is dabbling in. That young Papineau is clever enough to keep out of trouble. But Alain. If he had his sister's level head he would be safe enough. And Hector? That was something different. Hector had brains and would command very considerable influence. He evidently had a personal grievance against the Government and had besides a deep-seated hostility against Britain and a warm friendliness for the Americans. What did Josette mean about Madeleine? Hector and Madeleine?" He smiled at himself in his mirror. "Poor Hector. His chance with Madeleine is slight enough. And Jason? There's a lad that wants watching. He has unlimited ambition, that man. And he has no love for England, evidently. He is too clever for Hector. I should like to know just what is in his mind."

CHAPTER XVI

THE Richelieu roads and cross trails were finished. The winter snows had all run down in rivulets into the Richelieu on the east and to the Fleuve on the north. The spring sowing had ripened into July harvest. The great hay meadows along the low-lying reaches made the mighty rolling Fleuve look like a ribbon of deep blue rippling over a cloth of gold.

Francis Gore and his lovely and gay lady were paying a visit to Quebec, and the old grey city perched upon her craggy rock was gay with colour and vocal with the joyous strains of dance and song.

The habitants were jubilant. They had won a notable victory. Their beloved members of the House of Assembly, Taschereau, Blanchet, of their own city, and

Laforce Corbeil and the old hero, Pierre Papineau, had been released from prison and restored to their homes. But not Bédard.

"You are allowed to go free, M. Bédard," said the Governor of the jail.

"Let them come and set me free by process of law," replied the stubborn fighter.

"But the door is open. You are free to go!"

"I am no criminal. I have never been a criminal. I demand trial. Let them prove me a law-breaker or let me prove myself an innocent man." So back to prison he went and there remained for five months longer, vainly demanding his rights under that sign of British justice, the Habeas Corpus.

But meantime Brock, wise young diplomat, was making the best out of the visit of Francis Gore and his lady, and of the presence in the harbour of two British frigates with their officers, to heal the sore spots in the hearts of the *noblesse* of Quebec and win them to unity and enthusiasm for the defence of the old fortress which he well knew represented the final stronghold of British rule in the northern half of America.

A great dinner was planned and a grand ball for all the élite of the proud old Quebec families and for the important if more common folk of the trading, manufacturing and professional classes, with a proper and salutary admixture of the dignitaries of the Church.

The noble ball-room of the Château, but lately restored to its ancient grandeur, was crowded with lovely women in Parisian and London gowns and as lovely women in the sweet and unpretentious simplicities of the dress-makers and coiffeuses of the old city. The Seigneurs splendid in their grandeur of the *ancien régime*, their sons in suits *à la mode*, the product of British outfitters, and with these officers from the garrison and haughty, cool, contemptuously, but not offensively superior, the naval officers from H.M. frigates swinging on their anchors in the Fleuve below. At every door on guard in the cor-

ridors at strategic points, for Brock was taking no chances and the military patrol had been removed only that day, splendid in their half-savage finery, stood a picked body of the *coureurs de bois*. These by Brock's orders, and under command of Red Rory of Malbaie, stood ever within signal distance of the General's hand and eye.

The dance was drawing to its close. The supper had been prolonged to an unusual length. The wines had been of rare vintage and without stint. Gaiety, hilarity to the limit, and beyond the limit in the case of many of the younger city set, had marked the great occasion. The hour had come for the last great cotillion.

With gloomy face and sombre eyes Red Rory stood at his place at the door leading by a corridor from the great banquet hall to the dancing-salon. In all this gay splendour he had no part. He was not of their class. Some of them were his friends. But to none had he given any sign of recognition. They had passed within a few feet of him in the Grand March and as they whirled past in valse and mazurka, but he had kept his face turned from them. His cousin, Simon Fraser, with his lady on his arm, the most distinguished of all the *grandes dames* that thronged the room, had touched his shoulder, but he had turned his back upon them. Miss Christine and her brother, Tom, lately home from abroad and splendid in his uniform of the Newfoundland regiment into which he had recently exchanged, had paused beside him admiring the gay, wild barbarity of his forest costume, but he had kept his face towards the corridor beyond the exit. Josette, on the arm of Max with a happy quiet look on her face, had touched his arm and made him give her recognition.

"Look, Max!" she had whispered. "See my dear Cousin Rory! How splendid he is!"

"Why, Rory, is it you? And why have we never seen you?"

"On duty, Max, pass along," he had replied, "don't block the entrance, please."

His voice, coldly formal, haughty indeed, had shocked his cousin.

"Come, Max," she whispered, "he does not want us just now."

"Well, I'm damned," said Max as Josette dragged him away.

He had another bad moment when there suddenly emerged from the supper-room a group of rollicking almost riotous youth in the centre of which, gaily laughing and chattering, on the arm of Hector Fraser, came Madeleine Van Rancken, a vision of brilliant entrancing loveliness. Her face was turned over her shoulder as she tossed to two or three young naval officers snatches of gay repartee. But Hector's eyes fell upon and held Red Rory's face. He had just enough liquor in him to be reckless. With a shout he stepped forward.

"Why, it is my beloved cousin," he cried. "Hello, where the devil——"

"What? Who is it?" cried Madeleine, turning swiftly. "Your cousin?"

"Surely! Old Rory, my beloved cousin. He vanished into that corridor. Oh, hold on, I say——"

But Madeleine was gone running swiftly down the corridor, past a line of *coureurs de bois* standing at intervals on guard, scanning each face as she ran to the very end and peered through the door which opened upon a hall. Then disappointed she came back to meet Hector anxiously searching for her.

"And now where in the world have you been?" he asked.

"Where has he gone? Are you sure you saw him? Are you sure?" She was quite breathless. "You must be mistaken. He would not have run away like that." Her lips were trembling.

"It was my precious cousin. I have not seen him for months. He keeps out of my way. Indeed he is acting rather strangely."

"But my letters? You are sure you delivered them to him?"

"They were put in his box with his mail. Have you not heard from him? Of course he has been away from civilization for the last four months. He is a queer chap though. He suddenly turned his back upon me and avoided me."

"Then you must have given him cause. But let us not talk of him."

The final grand cotillion was forming upon the floor preparatory to the break-up of the ball, when far away at the lower end of the salon there seemed to arise a sudden confusion. People began crowding together in excited groups. Then shrill through the opening strains of the band in a woman's voice, shrill with terror, came that most awful of all cries.

"Le feu! Fire!"

Instantly there was a mad rush towards the door furthest from the banqueting-hall. The air was rent with cries and shrieks of women, and shoutings and cursings of men. At the door next the drawing-room a thin wisp of grey blue showed itself, curling in at the door. The only exit was a door at the other end of the salon opening into the corridor. This door became at once jammed with a mad crowd of struggling men and women seeking escape from the most dreadful of all deaths.

Through the uproar came the stentorian voice of the General.

"Officers! This way!" But the crowd of excited civilians prevented obedience.

Then high, clear, like the thin call of a bugle penetrating the confused roaring, came the long-drawn rallying cry of the voyageur. Immediately along the corridor came the sound of quick-running feet. Two or three tall men in buckskins dashed in through the door upon the milling crowd.

"Malbaie! A moi!" came the voice of Red Rory.

Behind the three forming a wedge other *coureurs de bois* came crowding in through the door.

"Get back, you men," ordered Rory to those next him. "You won't? Then take that!" Two men dropped and were trampled under the feet of the crowd.

"Allons, mes enfants!" he cried. Straight into the crowd charged six tall *coureurs de bois*, their arms working like flails. Two seconds and twelve men were knocked back upon the crowd, making a small semicircle about the door. Other Malbaie men came crowding in.

"Pass these women through," ordered Red Rory. "We will hold this crowd." Swiftly from hand to hand the women were passed through the door into the corridor.

"Hooroo! Howly mother o' Moses! Is it yourself, Rory? Come on then, lads." It was Fitz-Gibbon with a line of officers behind making a flank drive through the crowd to Rory's aid. A few moments' sharp fighting and the semicircle about the door was enlarged, a line of men began passing out women swiftly into the corridor. Immediately, as every man saw what was taking place, he joined the line of guards. Gradually the milling ceased, the cries of women died down, order was restored. Soon there came the cry from the far door. "A-a-ll o-o-v-e-r! The fire is out!"

At once men hurriedly pulled themselves together, began to laugh loudly and assure the ladies of their safety.

"Finish the dance, me bhoys," cried Fitz-Gibbon. "Let's do the thing right!"

Loud cheers greeted the proposal. Once more the cotillion was formed, partners were recovered, the band crashed forth its music, the dance was on.

"How did you get me, Rory?" said Madeleine, clinging hard to his arm as they stood near the door.

"You were the first I saw," he said, his hand gripping hers hard.

"And Hector, where is he?" she asked. She was still trembling with excitement.

"The last I saw of him he was across the room fighting like a madman to get to you," said Red Rory, looking at her strangely.

"Poor Hector. He is a strange boy. He is very fond of me. I wonder where he is. Don't look that way, Rory. He is a very good friend of mine. He will be anxious."

"Do you want me to find Hector for you?" asked Rory gently.

"Oh, yes! If you don't mind. Bring him to us." He looked at her strangely, his eyes cold, his face growing stern.

"I will find him for you," he said. As he was about to leave her he saw the General pushing through the crowd of dancers towards them.

"My God! Fraser, you are a man!" he said, holding out both his hands to Rory.

Rory made no reply.

"Yes!" replied Madeleine softly, her eyes shining like two blue stars. "He is a man, and," she added proudly, "he is my friend."

"I shall not forget this, boy," said the General in a husky voice as he went back to his place at the Governor's side. "Come to me to-morrow morning."

"All right, sir," said Rory, setting out to find Hector.

The cotillion ended. The guests once more trooped into the banqueting-hall, where they stood to re-establish their shattered nerves and regain their pose. An overturned lantern had set fire to a mass of oiled rags in the kitchen, causing a mass of black smoke to filter up into the dance salon. One by one the ladies who had escaped by the corridor through the assistance of Red Rory and his band of *coureurs de bois* were found and brought back to the supper-table.

Rory found Hector searching the waiting-rooms leading off the corridor, battered and bruised and rushing about like one distracted.

"Madeleine? Have you seen Madeleine?" he cried, clutching Red Rory.

Without a word Red Rory took him by the arm to the door of the salon. "There she is," he said, and turned away, his face set, his blue eyes fixed in a dull stare. He had not seen Madeleine for thirteen weeks. He had had no word or sign from her during that time. He had just saved her from possible death. And she had asked for Hector. The whole thing was a mistake. A sudden and wild fancy for a habitant youth with whom she had been romantically associated she had mistaken for a deep passion. Hector had his own fascination. Besides, he had wealth, position and future. Madeleine had taken a rather cruel but effective way of letting him know the truth. "He is my friend," she had said. Well, he would be her friend if opportunity offered. That was all. It had been a wonderful dream, too wonderful for the cold reality of life.

Meantime Madeleine was striving to get Hector into a condition of self-controlled sanity.

"Where did he go? And what did he say? Where is he now? I must find him. I tell you, I must find him!"

She ran to the door, but Rory had vanished. She returned to Hector.

"Oh, you must find him," she said, wringing her hands.

"Why all the fuss?" said Hector sullenly.

"Fuss? He has just saved my life. Besides he—I— Oh, I must find him. I am going away home almost at once."

"I will bring him to you after we go home," said Hector.

But, after a very honest and thorough search, Hector returned to announce his failure. All next day she waited, postponing her departure for home in hope of Rory's return, but in vain. What could be the meaning of his strange behaviour? And his silence? A dozen

letters she had written him. Fighting back her tears she bade farewell to her friends, the Frasers, and carried with her to her home in Albany an ache in her heart the more poignant because its cause remained inexplicable.

CHAPTER XVII

NEXT morning, when Red Rory appeared at the General's office he found the Governor with his heads of departments in conference with the General. News of ominous import from the South had arrived. The menace of war was more imminent than ever before. The news from Home more disturbing. There was no hope of aid from the mother country for the colony.

"We are abandoned to our own resources apparently," said the Governor, who was in his gloomiest mood.

"It seems to me, your Excellency, that we must do something in the way of enrolling our militia in this province as we have in Upper Canada."

The Governor shook his head impatiently.

"Permit me, your Excellency. The Seigneur Cuthbert is eager to enrol a company."

"Ah, if all the Seigneurs were like Cuthbert."

"Then there are others. Colonel Fraser of Malbaie is eager to do the same thing."

"The old Colonel is sound enough," said the Governor.

"Besides these there are others. Major de Salaberry is certain he could enlist a battalion of light infantry, Voltigeurs he calls them, that would make an effective force for service in the broken country along the Richelieu—woodsmen, coureurs de bois, voyageurs, lumbermen and the like. Men of all nationalities. These men under leaders familiar with the country would be of great service in repelling invasion from the Champlain district. Here is my friend, Fraser, who showed himself a man of such courage and promptitude last night. Under him these men would be invaluable."

The Governor nodded. "Yes. Yes. This man is the right sort. But he has had no military training. We can't trust greenhorns with command."

"He knows the woods and rivers and——"

"He knows nothing of military drill, do you, Fraser?"

"No, sir, not a thing," said Red Rory promptly.

"Let me have him under Sergeant Crimps for six weeks and he will know everything necessary. What you want really is a man who can handle men in the bush."

The Governor shook his head doubtfully. "Would you like to be a soldier, Fraser?" he asked.

"No, sir. I would hate it."

"There you are, General."

"Fraser, could you take a hundred men through the bush to Plattsburg without letting the world know about it?"

"Of course. Why not?"

"In winter? Remember Arnold," said the Governor.

"Arnold was a clumsy bungler. He deserved all he got," said Red Rory in a voice full of contempt.

"He was a brave man and commanded brave men," countered the Governor sharply.

"He didn't know his route. He couldn't feed his men. Couldn't even keep them warm. Brave man all right, but in the woods a fool. With a hundred men—with fifty men, I could have killed the lot of them." Red Rory's voice was full of anger.

"Ha!" exclaimed the Governor. "You don't think much of soldiers."

"Not in the bush, sir, handled by men who don't know it."

"We have got a long way past Braddock," said the Governor.

"Not with parade-ground soldiers," said Red Rory, scorn in his voice and eyes.

"Aha! One for you, General. I suppose you could capture even the 49th?" The 49th was Brock's own.

For some unaccountable reason Red Rory was thoroughly angry. "Yes, the 49th. Take them ten miles up the St. Charles through the bush. I will agree to ambush them half a dozen times before they reach the mouth."

"By gad, I should like you to try," said the General. "Fraser, would you like to take service under me?" he asked, turning his luminous blue eyes upon Red Rory.

The heat faded from Red Rory's angry eyes, a rush of emotion choked his throat. Silently he looked into those eyes, then said slowly:

"Yes, sir, I should."

"I want a battalion of *coureurs de bois*, river men and that sort, to help defend this country of ours from those who would take it from us. Will you help me get them?" There was a deep note of passion in the General's voice, a burning light of enthusiasm in his eye.

"Believe me, I will, sir," said Red Rory, his own voice thrilling with emotion.

"And, your Excellency, I wish now to offer, by your authority, a captaincy in that battalion to Mr. Fraser, when he qualifies."

"All right. When he qualifies. Meantime what about ambushing your 49th, General?" asked the Governor with a smile.

"I will give him a chance, sir, and gladly. If he with his *Voltigeurs* can outmatch or ambush my 49th, I will give him and his company the best dinner they ever had in their lives."

In the private conversation which followed the General made clear just what was his purpose.

"Fraser, you have the qualities of command necessary in a first-rate officer. The militia in this country is under a cloud. It is discredited. I want you to select as many men as you can, and wherever you can, but let them be as like your own gang as possible. Then I want you to train them for bush fighting."

"I cannot undertake to make parade-ground soldiers, sir. I am not one and I can't become one."

"Fraser, give me your attention." The General's voice was grave, almost stern. "This parade-ground drill which you despise has been proved by long experience to be valuable and essential for the making of soldiers. Much of it will not be needed for your special work. But discipline, prompt and unquestioned obedience to orders, is essential, absolutely essential. You must master this for yourself and then give so much of it to your men as I shall suggest for my purpose. This means hard work, unremitting work, for the time is short—very, very short. You understand?"

"Yes, sir, I will do my best."

"That is all I ask. I will put you in charge of Sergeant-major Scrimmes. He is a martinet but a sound officer. Without question you must take his orders, whatever they be."

"Yes, sir."

"I trust you, Fraser," said the General. "Man to man, I trust you."

It was the Brock touch. The touch that gave him his unique power over men, that enabled him to hammer into a magnificent fighting machine, not only his own incomparable 49th regiment, but his Upper Canada militia that took their place beside his regulars with credit to themselves in some of the stiffest fighting ever seen in the annals of the British army.

"I shall hate the whole business," Red Rory confided to Simon Fraser that night, as he was recounting his interview with the General. "But I am going through with it."

"The General is after a very big thing, Rory," said Simon very earnestly, "and it is not for you or me to understand. Come away upstairs. They are asking why you are not seeing them."

"Not to-night, Cousin Simon."

"And why not? What have I been doing to you, Rory?"

"Nothing, but— No, I cannot go—not to-night. Do not ask why. Some time I may tell you." Red Rory's face was the picture of misery.

"Very well, lad. One thing you will be remembering, that whatever comes, or whoever comes, you have your place with me, lad."

Without a word Rory turned away.

"There is something amiss with the lad," Simon confided to his wife.

"Ah, well. Young men make their own trials sometimes, and they must just carry them through."

"What is in your mind?" asked Simon.

"Oh, who can say?" said Madame lightly. "Rory is a clever young man. But there are certain—what shall I say?—attainments that are beyond his powers, beyond his station. After all, Rory is of the habitants, my dear."

"He is far more than that. He will make for himself a place and a name, and I for one will gladly be helping him."

"You have those nearer you to whom you might give help," replied his wife with a touch of bitterness rare in her.

"Now, what is this, my dear? You have something in your heart."

"Yes, Simon. I will say it. You have your own flesh and blood. My heart is broken for Hector. He is unhappy. He is baffled at every turn. He was blocked by this Government, robbed of his place, and now what is there before him? Everywhere he turns it is the same. No, no, do not speak——"

"But, my dear, you are terribly excited. What do you mean?"

"Look at him now. Have you no eyes?" Across the room Hector was leaning over Madeleine, his face pale, his eyes glowing with an intense fire. "He is mad

for that girl. Why does she not respond? She is fascinated with him, and what wonder! There is no one like Hector! Something, someone prevents—ah, I do not wish to invite to my home Rory during this visit of Madeleine's. Do not interrupt, Simon, I beg you. Give our boy a chance. Do not distract this girl. Oh, I know well. She is interested in Rory, a kind of romantic infatuation with that boy, his Vitesse, his work—oh, he is a good enough boy, but who would compare him with Hector? There you have my heart. Now, Simon, do not interfere with me. I have my plans. Hector shall have his full opportunity this time." She paused, reading her husband's face. "Ah, Simon, you are grieved with your wife and perhaps I am too. But I have only one boy."

"My dear, my dear, I live only for your happiness. Do what you will. But it will not come to pass, my dear. I have read the girl's eyes and they are not for Hector."

"Ah, I entreat only a chance for our boy. It will be new life for him, Simon."

"New life? Yes, that is what he wants," muttered Simon to himself. "God pity us all. New life, and a new heart. So be it, my dear. I love that boy, but you are my very heart. Have it your way."

"Ah, Simon, you are a very great man and a gentleman," said his wife, kissing him.

At this moment Miss Christine Nairne came running in, greatly excited.

"Oh, do you know, my dear Madame Fraser, the news? The most glorious news! My dear brother, Tom, who you know came back from England only a few weeks ago, is to be in Malbaie this week. There is to be a formal installation in his Seigneurie. Dear old Colonel Fraser is quite determined that it will be a great event. Of course I must be there, and Mother wishes me to bring as many of our friends with me as I can persuade to come."

"Oh, my dear, but how wonderful ! How divine !" exclaimed Madame.

"And our grand water fête might take us all down to Malbaie instead of up the Fleuve in Jason's wonderful clipper. My mother and Tom would be so very charmed."

"But why not ? Jason ! Where is Jason ? Oh, there you are. Héloïse ! The most glorious news. Mr. Tom Nairne, Captain Tom Nairne—I humble myself before him—has arrived at Malbaie and Christine invites us all down for a visit, instead of going on a cruise up the river. A visit to Malbaie ! Ah, what a joy always ! What do you say, Jason ?"

"My ship goes down stream quite as well as up, and is at your service. What do you say, Héloïse ?"

"It is not for me to say," replied the girl, her pale face flushing warmly. "It is whatever Mamma says."

"Then down the Fleuve it is. That is, if you are quite sure your mother would be prepared for a party of twenty or so."

"My dear, the Nairne manor-house is ready at any time and for any number. You will be glad to see Malbaie, Madeleine," said Miss Christine. "It is a very lovely place and so interesting. And old Colonel Fraser, the Seigneur, quite a grand old man—and besides, you know that is Red Rory's home."

A quick, hot flush flamed in Madeleine's face and faded as quickly, leaving it quite pale.

"Oh, yes, that would be splendid. And, who knows, we may catch a beluga. Do you remember, Christine, how they told us about the beluga—Alain and Josette and—Rory ?" Again the quick flush came.

"It would indeed be delightful to visit your mother, Christine ; and my old friend the Seigneur Fraser, a very gallant old gentleman ; and, yes, Madeleine, you might be fortunate enough to see the habitants catch the beluga. It is very exciting, I believe." Madame had assumed her very grandest air.

A deeper flush touched the cheek of the young girl, but she remained silent.

The water fête had been arranged as part of the festivities in connection with the visit of Lieutenant-Governor Gore and his lady. The old city of Quebec was throbbing with a new spirit of national fervour and pride. The imprisoned members of the House of Assembly had been released, all but M. Bédard, who refusing release continued to demand trial. The Secretary Ryland had departed for England on a mission for the Governor. Relieved of the sinister influence of his presence and counsel, Sir James gave fuller scope to his native generosity of heart and strove to win the confidence of his political opponents. The social amenities of Government House, in which both French and English heartily joined, did much to heal the breach between the races which political ambition and jealousy had created and emphasized.

The water fête, which had been eagerly promoted by both General Brock and the Governor, had been planned to take the form of a trip by bateaux up the river to Sillery, where a picnic and dance should follow and then a grand procession of boats down stream in the moonlight to the strains of the garrison band.

The return of the young Seigneur Tom Nairne, after years of absence in England and with his regiment on the Continent, had suggested to Miss Christine the more ambitious project of a sail to Malbaie with a formal visit to the contiguous Seigneuries of Madame Nairne and Colonel Fraser.

The superabundant energy of Miss Christine and her influence with both General Brock and the Governor availed to carry through the change in the programme. Jason's swift clipper, the "Newport Maid," was offered for the event. A swift courier was despatched to announce the tidings. The scope of the function was much enlarged. Hector offered his fast clipper, the "Firefly," and the whole town was agog with excitement.

"Rory, you will take 'Firefly' for us," said Hector.

"I am not going," said Red Rory.

"Not going? To Malbaie? Your own home village? Why, you are to show the party all the beauties of Malbaie."

"I am not going," said Red Rory again, and turned away without further speech.

In great disgust Hector reported his decision to Miss Christine.

"You know, Christine, it would be a great thing if Red Rory should be on hand to show off the place to our guests. He would be a picturesque figure—kind of typical habitant, as it were—don't you see?"

"He ought to be with us, of course. He is so popular with everyone. The ladies would all adore him," said Miss Christine, with a wicked glance at Madeleine Van Rancken who was standing near.

"He really is adorable," said Madeleine, with a little touch of colour.

"You must persuade him, Madeleine," said Miss Christine.

"I? I have not seen him for months and months. He has forgotten my existence."

"How sad! You know I am very fond of Rory. If I were only a score of years nearer his age!" said Miss Christine, with a sigh. "You have not seen him for months, Madeleine. Then it is your own fault. I warrant you, young lady," added Miss Christine severely, "Red Rory is the most loyal of friends. I must speak to him about it."

"If you dare!" cried Madeleine, gripping Miss Christine fiercely by the arm.

"Rory is a busy man. He must work for his living," said Hector. "But apart from all this nonsense he really would be a great help. I wanted him to sail the 'Firefly' for me."

Miss Christine eyed Hector shrewdly. "Yes," she said meditatively. "No one knows Malbaie water like Rory, and there is no better sailor on the Fleuve."

"Then he could show the party Malbaie sights from the habitant point of view, you see," continued Hector.

"Ah, from the habitant point of view?" Miss Christine's eyes were searching Hector's face. "That is quite true. Yes, certainly Rory must come. Don't you think so, Madeleine?"

"He will please himself," said the girl.

"Well, that is not quite his outstanding characteristic," said Miss Christine.

"Oh, I mean he——"

"Are you sure you know what you mean?" said Miss Christine. "But I must speak to Master Rory. He usually tries to please me, the dear boy. Of course he will do the habitant showman's turn very perfectly. Well, we shall see."

An angry light burned in Madeleine's eyes. Nor did Hector seem too well pleased with Miss Christine.

"And what is this I hear, Rory?" she said, when she had made it her business to run him down in Simon Fraser's private room.

"Well, what's my last crime?" asked Rory, with his broad smile.

"You are refusing to come with us to Malbaie."

"Why should I go?"

"Hector wants you to sail the 'Firefly.'"

"Hector?"

"Don't take that tone. He is Simon Fraser's son."

"Yes, he is, worse luck."

"And Madame's only son and the pride and joy of her life."

"Yes, God pity her. Can I help her in any way by sailing the 'Firefly' for her son?"

Miss Christine's face grew very grave. "Is it so serious, Rory? About Hector? I have heard things."

"What things, and how?" said Rory quickly.

"Through Josette, a shrewd little girl and very loyal, and she pumps her handsome and romantic and very silly brother, Alain."

"Alain? Ah, I see you have heard things. You make me anxious for Simon Fraser and for Madame. Alain is a romantic idiot. Hector is different. He is shrewd and able. He hates the Government, and with some reason doubtless. He loves the Americans."

"Some of them obviously." Red Rory refused to be drawn. "He has vast trading interests with the Americans, and he fancies himself as a coming leader of French Canada. He is a tremendous Republican and would like to see Canada a republic. And Jason Appleby is pulling his leg."

"Ah, that's it, eh? Are you sure of that with Jason? I fancied it was Héloïse there."

"It is Héloïse, poor girl. He is not trifling with her, or my signs are all wrong," said Miss Christine warmly. "He is infatuated with her, genuinely infatuated."

Red Rory pondered this.

"That would complicate things," he mused, "most damnably. You are sure of that?"

"Rory, trust an old maid's power of observation. Jason is quite mad about Héloïse and the girl is very deeply interested and flattered. You see he is her first really eligible lover, poor dear."

"It is the very devil of a problem. I had made my plans about Mr. Jason, but if—if you are right about her! I can hardly think you are. She is so loyally British and he is so American."

"Don't be a fool, Rory. A girl in love has no politics, no country, no caste, nothing—one only passion possesses her." Miss Christine's blue eyes were alight with deep fires.

Red Rory gazed at her in amazement. "Not so with you, Miss Christine. You need not tell me you would put any man before your country."

"Try me! Listen, you poor child. I would give honour, truth, virtue, country, yes, my soul for the man I loved and who loved me." Her voice shook, her face was colourless, her blue eyes dark with the intensity of

her passion. "And so would you unless I have read you wrong all these years—and these last months," she added significantly.

"I don't know what you mean," he stammered, "but —"

"Don't lie—and don't be a fool," said Miss Christine impatiently. "But we stray from the point. Why not sail the 'Firefly,' not for Hector, but for the rest of us? Hector is no sailor and the waters about Malbaie are treacherous and the winds tricky. Jason is a good sailor."

"None better," said Red Rory. "He is a master."

"But Hector? No, no. I would be quite unhappy. I am a great coward and there are our guests—and Madeleine."

"Leave her out!" commanded Rory, forgetting his wonted reverence for Miss Christine. "I will not speak of Miss Van Rancken. Why should I?"

"You wouldn't like her to be drowned in the Malbaie waters?" suggested Miss Christine.

"No! My God, no!"

"Rory boy." Miss Christine's voice was very gentle. "I know you love her."

He gazed unflinchingly into her eyes, his own dark with pain.

"And I think she loves you."

"I thought so too—for a few—hours—of madness."

"But I will be honest with you, laddie. I do not know how to advise you. She is a great heiress, and her people are great people."

"And I am habitant."

"And a Highlander," said Miss Christine. "Don't forget that and don't be absurd, but you are habitant and your prospects for greatness none too bright. You see how honest a friend I am. No, stop—I have given long and deep and bitter thought to this, Rory, ever since the day you lost Vitesse. I read her heart that day."

"Ah, yes! She loved Vitesse! And, poor fool, I thought——"

"Let me speak on till I finish, Rory," ordered Miss Christine. "It is my last word to you on this matter, and I must give you all I have to give. I was certain I read love in her eyes that day. But she is very young, you were very attractive—don't interrupt me—and your eyes were very eloquent, and she was very fascinated. Then she went away home and then Hector came in—don't interrupt—Hector has his attractions, and he has a strong backing. Madame is a great force in these matters and a past-mistress in diplomacy. Simon is for you, of course, but Madame is first with him, so there you are. Listen just a moment more—you may thank me for this some day. After all, will you give heed to this, Rory—full weight to it? The whole thing turns on one thing only—does Madeleine love you? If she wanted you for her man, to love her and to take her, and if you were sure of that, what would you do, Rory?"

He paused a few moments, then made answer slowly :

"I would consider—I would try to think—what was—best for her."

"Oh, I could strike you in the face!" cried Miss Christine. "Oh, what fools, what damned egoistic fools men are!" Passionate tears flooded her eyes and choked her speech. "And why in God's name must you think for her, if the girl you love is dying to have you take her and carry her off in the teeth of all the world? Ah, don't I know it?" Her hands were hard upon her breasts, her breath coming in deep sobs. "He thought so too, in his high-minded, selfish, foolish pride. And here I am to-day. And he, poor dear, married to one he does not love and never can, for she knows not what love means. There, I have told you what not even my mother knows. Why should I? Only because I would not have her suffer what I have suffered and shall suffer till this heart," she beat hard upon her breast, "is done with love and grief and pain."

Rory caught her hand in both of his and held it to his lips, his tears flowing down his cheeks.

"Miss Christine, what can I do to prove to you my love, my humble gratitude?"

"I will tell you, Rory. Give the girl a chance. Let her have the say. Don't try to read her heart. She has a proud, deep, but I think true and tender heart. Give her a chance to say plainly if she wants you and, if her answer is yes, then let nothing in heaven, earth or hell baulk her of her desire."

Still holding her hand hard in his, Rory was silent for a space, then, in a voice low, clear and vibrant with solemn feeling, he said :

"Miss Christine, you have asked a hard thing. I had made up my mind that I had made a mistake and that never again would I speak to her alone, but you have done a great thing in giving me your confidence to-day and I owe you this. I promise you I will give her the chance to say if she wants me to take her and, if her answer is yes, then no man, no woman, nothing in God's wide earth will stop me taking her and keeping her and serving her till I die. But you will let me choose my time."

And so it came to pass that when the day of the water fête arrived and the "Firefly," like a white-winged bird, came to rest at the dock-side just below the citadel, it was Red Rory of Malbaie who was at her helm.

CHAPTER XVIII

HE kept his place at the tiller for most of the four and a half hours' sail down the Fleuve to Malbaie, seeming unaware of Madeleine's gay blue eyes that turned to him now and then as she talked with Hector and Miss Christine.

When the boats were moored at the jetty, he determined to slip away unobserved to his mother's house, but Hector called after him :

"Where are you going? Are you not coming to the festivities at the Nairne manor-house?"

"No! Not with those gentry. My place is with my own people—the habitants. I am on my way now to my mother's." Rory's tone was full of bitterness.

Hector pondered a few moments.

"You know best, of course. I can't advise you as to that."

"No, you cannot, nor can anyone else. I take my own way."

"But Miss Christine will expect you, I am sure," Hector said doubtfully.

"I think not. Good day." Rory turned abruptly from him and took his way towards his mother's house.

He found his home empty. His mother and his grandfather were apparently gone to do honour to the young Seigneur Nairne. He determined to wait their return. He was no censitaire of Seigneur Nairne. He belonged to the old Colonel.

He washed himself and dressed in the clothes his mother had made for him. They were of rough homespun and habitant in style. Well, he was habitant and as habitant he would dress.

He lit his pipe, and sitting in the chair his grandfather had made, oak frame and moose hide seat and back, he looked about him upon the homely kitchen and its furnishings.

Everything was habitant made, tables, chairs, picture frames, the *prie-Dieu*, the big clothes-press, the open cupboard filled with old china and quaint pewters that had come with his mother's people from Brittany. Above the open fire-place a solid oak mantelpiece black with smoke bore a pair of brass candlesticks, shining like gold, and some queer china figures.

The whitewashed walls, the beamed ceiling, the pine floor of hewn logs carefully matched, scrubbed white as sea-sand and soap could make them, the solid furniture of simple and beautiful design, gave one a feeling of

homely comfort. But there was more than comfort in the room.

On the walls hung his father's claymore and pistols, his grandfather's old musket of '59, his own rifle, some deer heads, trophies of his grandfather's and his own prowess in hunting : and, by themselves in a panel at the side of the chimney, the emblems and symbols of his mother's religion. Comfort and a suggestion of something finer than mere animal well-being, of the things of the spirit. A book-shelf carried his own books and a few which his grandfather had brought with him from his Highland home, a big Bible, the Confession of Faith and the larger Catechism.

In one corner of the kitchen an open staircase led to the attic where as a boy Rory had slept. In another corner the face of a bake-oven stove was built out through the wall.

Opening off the kitchen a small parlour contained the more precious of the family Penates, and off the parlour two small bedrooms, his mother's and his own. His old grandfather preferred to sleep in his own cabin. It was all very familiar, and because of its homeliness he loved it. More than Simon Fraser's beautiful and splendid rooms he loved it. He belonged here. This was the home of his people. And yet as he gazed about upon the dear and familiar things he knew he would never make this his home. All this belonged to the far-away days of his boyhood. How far away they seemed ! He belonged now to another world. That great world where moved Governors and Generals and great ladies and men who did big things. That was his world and, habitant though he was, he felt in his soul the right to a place in that world. And then the door opened and he was in his mother's arms.

"I knew where to find you," she said when they were calm again. "And they were telling me about you." Instinctively in her intimate moments with him she would drop into his father's accents and idioms of speech.

"And they will be asking for you, Rory. And you must put on your other clothes."

"These are my best clothes, mother, the very best I have."

She laughed a happy little laugh. "Indeed I was proud of them myself. But to-night you will put on the grand clothes from the city."

"Not I, mother. These are the clothes that fit me best and——"

"Fit ye?" Again she laughed happily. "Ay, they fit ye, lad, but they are not seemly in yon company."

"They are not our people, mother," he said, with a touch of bitterness.

"Indeed and they are then. Your people and your father's people." Her proud little black head went up. "And not one of them better than he was nor better than you are yourself."

"And not one of them the equal of my mother."

Suddenly she went to him, settled herself down into his arms with her own arms about his neck. Never had she done such a thing before.

"Oh, laddie, laddie, I have seen her," she whispered, her slight form quivering. "Oh, she is the beautiful thing! The beautiful thing. And to her I must give you up." Sobs shook her. "Yes, my Rory, my bonny man, I must give you up. You could not help yourself. Hush! hush! Laddie, do not be saying lies to me. Oh, my laddie, I am saying good-bye to you. Let me weep a bit, just a wee bit."

In silent misery, Rory held her close in his arms, kissing, petting her as if she had been a child. Love made him know this was no time for words. And indeed what could words do in such a moment? Long he held her to his heart. Well he knew that his mother had pierced to the supreme mystery of life, the solemn mystery of love, mother love and that other love that dethrones mother love.

"For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother

and shall be joined to his wife." "His wife." The words recalled him.

"Yes, mother," he said. "I could not lie to you. She is beautiful and she is good too. You told me to keep my hand on my heart. I tried, mother, but I could not. Oh, I could not."

His words came like a moan of one stricken to the death.

His mother sat up quickly, released herself from his arms and sat near him in her own chair.

"Do you wish to tell me, lad?" she said gently.

"I thought for one night she loved me. And I think she thought so too. But she is only a child. She was mistaken."

"And how know you that?" said his mother, a hint of severity in her tone.

"I went away to the Richelieu. She was to write me, about her people, you know. She went home—that was in winter. I waited through the spring and summer, but she never sent word nor made sign. It would have been easier on me if she had just told me she had found out her mistake."

"And you have never spoken to her since?" Her voice was almost stern.

"No, mother. How could I?"

"The poor dear! How could you! Oh, how could you!"

"Mother!"

"And you gave her no chance to defend herself against your charge of faithlessness?"

"Charge? I made no charge. I said not a word, I am telling you."

"Ay. The most deadly way and the most cowardly. The man's way with a woman!" There was a quiet terribleness in her voice. The voice he remembered as always preceding chastisement in his boyhood days.

And at this point the latch again clicked.

"I knew I should find you here. And if it were

anyone but you I would never have demeaned myself to come for you. Madame, you have borne a most maddening son." Miss Christine was quite overpowering in her wrath.

"So I have been telling him," said his mother. "He is a foolish lad at times."

"Have I not dinged that into his lug many a time? Get up, ye gomeril, and come away. They are asking for you."

Rory was smitten with terror.

"Asking for me? And who wants me?" he gasped.

"Many of them, but especially my brother Tom, the Seigneur, not yours as it happens, though the Seigneur Fraser is quite in a rage about your effrontery as well."

"Effrontery?"

"Yes, you have insulted the whole Nairne family. Oh, but you are the darndest—pardon me, Madame, but he enrages me, does this son of yours. Come away. I just slipped out to save your honour and my face."

"Your face?" said Red Rory faintly.

"Ay, did I not say I had sent you on an errand and you would appear presently? So, come then. And your mother with you."

"Put on your good clothes, lad," said his mother anxiously.

"Damned if I do," said Rory angrily.

"Clothes? What matter about clothes?" said Miss Christine. "Stand up and let me look at ye. Hoots! These are the clothes your mother made from the sheep's back. Great heavens, what better could you find? Would I could wear them myself."

In spite of himself Rory grinned. "But mother——"

"Are you not coming?" Miss Christine's blue eyes flashed dangerously.

"But these clothes are—are much more suitable," faltered his mother, pointing to his city clothes on the chair.

"Madame, there will be no clothes fit to compare with these on his back. They do honour to you who made them and to him that wears them."

"I will wear these or none," said Rory between his teeth.

"Make your own choice about that," said Miss Christine, "but if you wear clothes, these are the clothes you will wear. Nay, never mind your blushes."

He would have taken his place with his mother among the habitants of the village, the censitaires of the young Seigneur of Malbaie, but Miss Christine would not have it.

"There is a place for both of you up yonder," she said, pointing towards the head table where the Seigneur and his guests were sitting.

Furiously Red Rory protested. It was Colonel Fraser, the old Seigneur of Mount Murray, that settled the dispute.

"Aha ! There you are, you young rascal !" he cried, rising to his feet and pointing a long arm towards the shrinking form of Red Rory. "Seigneur Nairne, I present to you one of my censitaires, Roderick Lovat Fraser, His Excellency's Master of Works, acting Captain of the clipper 'Firefly,' whom I am proud to call my very good friend, and also his respected mother."

The young Seigneur rose in his place at the head of the table.

"Ladies and gentlemen, Messieurs et Mesdames, it is my great pleasure to invite to a place at this table this distinguished young man, the friend of the honoured, well-beloved Seigneur of Mount Murray, and the friend of my mother and her family, as also his respected mother."

For a single instant Red Rory hesitated, looking about as if seeking escape, then, straightening his tall form to its full height and throwing back his head, he offered his arm to his mother and deliberately made his way to the places made for them. He placed his mother in

her chair and took his seat, finding himself between the two women he loved best in the world.

"Mother," he said softly, "this is Miss Madeleine Van Rancken. Madeleine, my mother."

The older woman shyly put out her hand, saying gently and with sweet dignity :

"I have heard a great deal about you, *ma chérie*."

"And I about you, dear Madame Fraser."

The ceremonial part of the proceedings was already finished. There remained only the formal speech of Colonel Malcolm Fraser, Seigneur of Mount Murray, the lifelong friend and comrade-in-arms of the young Seigneur's father, Colonel John Nairne, former Seigneur of Malbaie, in proposing the health of the newly installed Seigneur of Malbaie.

The Colonel was prosy and reminiscent. To himself and to his contemporaries he might have been interesting but to the others he was frankly dull.

The two women and Red Rory heard the sound of a voice but nothing else. They were feeling intensely, but words were impossible. Not impossible because impolite, but because words would let loose emotions which they knew would soon be uncontrollable. So they sat silent, waiting for they knew not what.

In Red Rory's mind his mother's words were repeating themselves. "And you gave her no chance to defend herself?"

Pretty much the same as Miss Christine had said too. "Give her a chance to tell you."

Leaning back in his chair, he shot a glance at the face of the girl beside him. She was staring straight in front of her. Beautiful! His heart sank in despair. Beyond words beautiful! And proud and strong! Her lips were closed in a firm, thin line. "A chance to defend herself." She needed none. Yet he was under promise to give her a chance. He felt like saying to her, "Why did you not write me?" But he knew he could not say that without saying much more. The words would

break a dam in his heart, and what would flood forth he dared not think. No! This was not the time.

He glanced at his mother's face. It was proudly happy, but troubled. No, he dared not speak to her. He must wait. The old Colonel's speech was drawing to a close. Then they were all on their feet drinking the young Seigneur's health with enthusiastic cheering.

The evening closed with a grand ball, the gentry dancing in the great hall and drawing-room, the commoners in the kitchen, till the midnight bell sounding from the church near sent them to their night's repose.

"May I come to see you to-morrow?" said Madeleine as she said good night to Rory's mother.

"Mine is a very little house, but it will be a great honour to have you in it," said the little lady.

"Come, Madeleine," said Miss Christine, accompanying Rory and his mother to the door after the adieux had been made. "I am for a walk down the hill this lovely night."

But Madeleine, holding back, whispered hurriedly:

"No, no, Christine, not to-night, not to-night."

Rory's mother saw the movement. "No, Miss Christine, please. You have had a hard day and this little one you must tuck up in her bed. Good night. Come, Rory, you too need rest."

"Me?" laughed Rory. "I am good for a ten-mile run yet."

"Put him to bed, Mrs. Fraser, and don't spoil him. He thinks he is a great man, but he needs his mother yet awhile. Come, kiss me good night, you silly boy. You dear, dear, silly boy," said Miss Christine, her voice none too steady as she put her arms round his neck and kissed him.

"Good night, Madeleine," said Rory.

"Good night, Rory," said the girl softly, offering her hand.

"Kiss her, you gowk," said Miss Christine, giving him a little push.

But Madeleine again shrank back and Rory bowed low over her hand. With a snort Miss Christine turned her back upon them and went into the house, leaving Madeleine to follow, while Rory turned away homeward with his mother.

An hour later as she tucked Rory into bed as if he had been a child, his mother said :

"This is a great day for you, my laddie. It is the beginning of a new life for you. You have passed from us to them."

"Not from you, mother, never from you."

A great part of the day following, Rory spent with Father Courtois in earnest consultation regarding the new company of Voltigeurs. The rest of the day he spent with his old comrades of the bush and the river, laying his lines for action later on. In the gay doings of the party from the city he took no part. His mind was in a turmoil. The significance of the events of the previous night he fully appreciated. Something had happened to him. His mother's words remained in his memory : "You have passed from us to them."

When Miss Christine and Madeleine made their visit to his mother's home he took care to be absent. As to what happened on that occasion he asked no question of his mother, nor did she, wise woman, either volunteer any information or make any further reference to the thing which she knew was as a torment in his soul. Not even when on the second day she kissed him good-bye did she mention the girl's name.

"Be patient and be fair, laddie," was all she said, leaving him to guess at her meaning.

On the homeward trip the sailing of the "Firefly" fully engaged his attention, for the weather was unsettled and some of his passengers none too secure on their sea legs. But, in their attitudes and their treatment of him, Red Rory was made to feel that a new day had dawned for him, a new life had opened for him. He was one of themselves.

CHAPTER XIX

SIMON FRASER'S shipyard on the north side of the Isle of Orleans was humming with activity. When the Fleuve flowed free in spring there would be doings calling for bateaux, gunboats and ships of war. Also at Sackett's Harbour hundreds of bateaux were a-building, and at Plattsburg gunboats and ships of war. For whoever held the waterways would surely win the coming war.

Few men, but unfortunately among those few the new Governor, Sir George Prevost, now doubted that the long-expected war was at the gate.

With driving energy, Red Rory, who had caught something of the spirit of the Commander-in-Chief of Upper Canada, and who was master of works in Simon Fraser's shipyard, was crowding his French Canadians and the select band of British ship-builders to the limit of their power, even to the danger line.

"They're kittle cattle," said Sandy Brodie, master ship-builder, to Red Rory one day. "Ye'll hae to be canny wi' them."

Sandy, a master of his craft, wise, shrewd and with a saving sense of humour, was a storm centre of all discussion. For during these days Rory was never sure of his temper, and he could not afford to lose his self-command with these volatile and uncertain French Canadians. He was glad therefore to use Sandy as a buffer. Furthermore, the advent of the new Governor, Sir George Prevost, who had been in office now for some four months, had introduced a new element of uncertainty into the political situation.

"'Ee's a Frenchman, 'ee is," said Humphrey Henshaw, a shipwright from the Tyne, one of the few Englishmen on the work. "'Ee ain't real British."

"That's right, 'Umphrey," said Artie Hunt, his friend and echo. "That's wot I says ever since 'is very first

speech. 'Why fight!' says 'ee, 'we'er all Canadians 'ere.' Them's 'is very words, I 'eard 'im."

"Aweel, Artie," said Sandy Brodie, "he michtna be sae far wrang since we're all livin' together here."

"That's so too," Artie agreed, "but some'ow it don't seem quite right from the governor of this country. 'E's English, says I."

"'Ee speaks French like a regular Frenchie," said Humphrey. "Not but wot that's to 'is credit, I only wish I could do the same."

"Ay, lad," said Sandy, "it is a great thing for him. The people can understan' what he's sayin', and there's less ground for suspecion. Noo Sir James, puir man, he micht be talkin' about the weather, but if ye only had his face tae gae by ye micht think he was orderin' ye off tae execution. It is a peety he hadna the language."

Howls, groans and cursing greeted the name of the late Governor, in which Alain, who was sitting near, joined.

This nettled the Scot. "Lad," he said gravely, "ye know better. Rory expects you to speak the things that make for peace."

"What do you mean?" asked Alain, flushing hotly.

"You ought tae be pourin' oil on the troubled waters. Ye ought tae speak wise words tae them."

"Why not speak yourself, Sandy?" said Alain.

"Man, would I not, had I but the language? Listen, lad, will ye as an honest man tell them what I say?"

"What do you mean?" asked Alain.

"The fowk didna understan' Sir James; noo then as an honest man will ye tell these lads what I'm sayin'?"

"I will," said Alain.

"Ay, I believe ye will, for ye have honest blood in ye. Ye're a McNab. Weel, tell them this: 'Sir James Craig was an honest man trying to do his duty.'"

A roar of dissent broke from the crowd and furious cries of indignation and disapproval.

"Lad," said Sandy, his voice grave and forthright, as

one honest man speaking to another honest man, "tell these lads tae gie me a fair hearin' and I'll speak the truth as I see it, and let ony of them that want to talk sense answer me back. Noo then, I kent Sir James Craig weel, I marched with him in '77. He was a soldier and nae politeecian, he spoke quick and he spoke plain, but he never lied to ony man. It wasna his faut that he was gi'en a Constitution to wark that wouldna wark. To allow people to govern themselves who never had nowt but tyrants to govern them, and often scoundrels and thieves at that. Ask them if they have ever heerd of a chiel ca'd Bigot."

The mention of Bigot's name brought profound silence. That name struck a sore spot in the mind of every Canadian.

Sandy pursued his advantage. "I hae nae use for bigots," he went on; "a man has a richt to his ain religion, and a man's religion is his ain business between himself and his God."

Again silence, not altogether unmixed with approval, greeted this new doctrine.

"Not but ye would a' be the better of bein' Presbyterians," Sandy went on, with a twinkle in his eye. "Ay, but it would be hard for ye, not bein' born Presbyterians. Bein' Presbyterians born is easy enough, but to be a Presbyterian by conviction is no that easy. Ye ken it requires brains."

As Alain translated this there was a moment of hesitation, but a glance at Sandy's twinkling eyes sent the whole group into delighted laughter.

"But the country is much better wi'oot yon Secretary buddie. But mind, I'm tellin' ye, Sir James gied ye honest government on the whole as far as he could, and at the last the Parliament itself gied intill him."

"Whose country is this, anyway? Who owns it?" a voice said.

"A difficult question is that, my lad, perhaps *you* will tell me who owns it."

"Those who discovered it, explored it, settled it and developed it."

"Ay, France," said Sandy.

"No, not France! France betrayed us," said the voice in tones of indignation. "Not France, the Canadians."

The word brought the whole company yelling to their feet.

"A guid answer," said Sandy, when the uproar had quietened down. "Come up here, lad, till I see ye're face."

"Come on, Leon! Stand up to him, Leon!"

From all sides came encouragement to Leon.

A tall, spare man in the dress of a *coursur de bois*, came up into the light of the flaring fires. His face was burnt to parchment texture, his glittering eyes deep sunken, his cheeks hollow. His whole manner was that of one unaccustomed to take orders, but his face bore the unmistakable marks of hard and reckless living.

"M. Leon Tremblay," said Alain, a certain tone of respect in his voice.

"That is me," said the man, facing Sandy with an air of almost contemptuous superiority. "My people came to this country with Cartier, they sailed these rivers with Champlain, they marched with Frontenac, they traced the Mississippi with La Salle. This is the country of my people for two hundred years."

The words lost nothing of their fire in Alain's translation.

"Ay, but I seem to mind hearin' of a man ca'd Wolfe," said Sandy quietly.

"It was not Wolfe that took our country. It was Bigot, Vaudreuil and the traitors at the Court of Versailles that sold our country to you," said Leon, in a voice of concentrated bitterness. "But we are here to-day, we have been here for two hundred years clearing the forests, building our homes, making a nation."

"You will also say as an honest man that for fifty years others hae been here as weel, and that more has been

done to build this country in the last fifty years than in the two hundred years before."

"True, but the foundations of a building are the most difficult and make the least show."

"Man, ye'er a clever chiel," said Sandy. "But what then, would ye kick us oot and leave ye to the Yankees? How lang wad ye last?"

For the first time Leon showed hesitation, a swift glance he threw over the faces before him, as if trying to read them.

"The Yankees are threatening Britain and not Canada," he said.

"That is the first fule answer ye made, and weel ye ken that though the Yankees are threatening Britain it is Canada they want, and it is Canada they'll have."

"Hélas! Ma pauvre patrie!" groaned Leon. "Sacr-r-é! Nom de nom! That will never be!"

"It is the only thing if Britain and Canada dinna stand together in this war."

"Ah! There may be found another way," said Leon. "Remember Dollard," he cried. Then with shoulders squared and head held high he walked to his seat, while his friends on all hands broke into tumultuous acclaim, in which Alain joined.

When they had calmed down, Sandy said:

"Aweel! that will bear some thinkin' aboot. Guid nicht. Awa' tae yer beds. But put this intill yer last pipe afore ye sleep: 'The collie that snappit at the shadow lost the bane.'"

The volatile and mercurial but happy French Canadians gave Sandy a great cheer as he left the room.

"Come wi' me," said Sandy to Alain as they left the room. "There's things to arrange for the morrow's morn."

Very unwillingly Alain went with the Scot as they left the cabin.

"Wha's yon lad?" asked Sandy, after he had got his fire going and his pipe alight.

"An old trapper and voyageur," said Alain. "They say he studied for a priest. But the usual thing—a woman, and then whisky."

"And what is the meaning of yon speech of his about some ither way?"

Alain did not reply.

"Weel, every man keeps his ain yett. I'll hae a chat with Rory," said Sandy.

"Don't mention me," said Alain anxiously.

"And why for no?"

"Rory has his own troubles," replied Alain.

"And noo he's awa' the morrow's morn to Albany on business for Simon Fraser and ither business as weel. Ye ken fine he has a right ti a' the information we possess."

"I can't speak, I am under a promise," said Alain.

"A promise! A promise agin yer ain flesh and blood? Agin Rory? Why not tak his advice aboot that?"

"It's not my secret," cried Alain, his face pallid and wet in spite of the coolness of the room.

In a few minutes he left the cabin.

During that same hour in Simon Fraser's private room at the back of his store, Rory was having a difficult time with his cousin.

"You are keeping something back from me, Rory."

"Suspensions are not facts, Cousin Simon, and in my case even suspicions may be due to prejudice."

"You don't like Jason Appleby, and you don't like Hector, Rory, I know that well."

Rory's face showed his distress.

"And you suspect that my son, Hector, would sell his country to the enemy."

"No, Simon, not that."

"But you don't trust him, and you will not tell me what you suspect. Then I will be giving you my suspicions. Hector for years has hated Britain; I need not go into the reasons. He hates this present government. In the United States he has had charge of my business.

He has made many friends there and, yes, I will tell you, he has one very dear friend."

Rory winced at this, but made no reply.

"He became the warm friend of Jason Appleby, whom we know to be a rabid American with a hatred of Britain in his heart, and perhaps with reason, for, as you know, his father was killed in the unfortunate affair of the 'Chesapeake' and 'Leopard.' Jason has great influence over Hector. Man to man I am asking you, Rory, do you suspect that my son, Hector, is planning to betray his country?"

The agonized face of the old man smote Rory to the heart.

"No, Simon, I don't believe it. Hector does not mean to do that."

"Oh, my God! what a relief! Then I have been suspecting the poor boy wrongfully."

Rory turned away from him and began examining a certain list of figures on the table.

"Well, well, that is a world of misery out of my heart," said Simon. "Now then, about these purchases. Your best market will be Albany. You will need to transport them overland to La Colle by Plattsburg. Buy all you can in class A, we need them for our boats and ships. Our friends in Albany will help you. But in addition, lad, you will be keeping your eyes and ears open. I can trust you, and the Governor trusts you. The Governor is none too eager about this, and were it not for the urgency of the General even this would be checked. Thank God for Brock, and for Upper Canada! This man is great with the French people, but I doubt he is lacking in the iron and steel needed for a man in his position."

"Well," answered Rory, "he has certainly captivated our French citizens. They will do anything for him."

"We will see what we will see," said Simon dubiously. "But, lad, you will be coming upstairs to say good-bye to the good wife and Héloïse."

"You have not mentioned my visit across the border to them?"

"No, I have not, but what difference?"

"Probably none, but will you just forbear speaking of it?"

"Very well, come away, lad."

Madame Fraser received Rory with a certain reserve. Ever since the excursion to Malbaie she had treated him with a slight excess of politeness. The delightful, old, frank relationship was gone. Héloïse, on the other hand, was more than usually cordial since that eventful expedition, and to-night she carried Rory off to her own corner for a confidential chat. Soon her conversation turned to Hector and his friend, Jason.

"They are great friends," she said, "they have so many things in common. You see, Hector admires the Republican form of government. He is not so fond of our Government as we are. He was bitterly incensed at Sir James."

"But he does not like Sir George any better, I notice."

"No, he despises him. Sir James at least was a man, he says, and a fighter. Prevost he calls a time-server and a molly-coddle. Just think of him making M. Bédard a judge at Trois Rivières, that was a bit thick. Father was very indignant, and so was Hector."

"And why Hector? Does that not please his beloved Canadians?"

"I don't quite understand. Hector is quite furious about it. But Jason says Prevost is a diplomat, and is playing a clever game. He is certainly winning the Canadians for his Government."

"He apparently can't believe in the probability of war. He refuses almost to consider it a possibility."

"But he is enrolling the militia and meeting with a splendid response."

"Yes, that is good policy. The French Canadian loves a uniform, and he is reinstating the old French officers in their commands."

"Well, let us quit politics," said Héloïse. "I have been wanting to ask you why we have not seen you for six weeks and more. I know maman is a little jealous of you because of Hector and Madeleine. You remember, during Madeleine's first visit—and during her second visit as well—she thought—well, we all thought,"—Héloïse laughed lightly, "that there was something between you and Madeleine, and so when her poor boy lost his heart to her maman naturally—well, you understand——"

"Of course," said Rory, speaking easily, "it was very natural."

"But now, Rory, you should not keep that against her and—since—since—that boy and girl affair of yours is all over——"

"Surely," said Rory heartily. "What could one expect? Of course she has one boy, I understand perfectly." His laugh rang out loudly throughout the room.

"What is so funny?" inquired Madame Fraser, coming across the room. "Roree has not laughed so loudly in this house for many times," she said.

"We are laughing about you, chérie, and your silly jealousy—you know—about Hector."

"About Hector?"

"Yes, maman. Hector and Madeleine. We understand perfectly—and Rory too," said Héloïse, gaily.

"Roree? Ah, yes, it was funny," said maman, with a little smile and a keen look at Rory's face.

"Yes, of course! Extremely funny!" said Rory, his laugh louder than before.

"Ah, yes, that is all over. And Madeleine writes that she is so very busy working against the war, and Max and Jason also. They are having so great excitements, public meetings and parades for peace. And Hector is so interested in all that when he visits Albany, though not in public."

"Splendid!" said Rory. "And so they are all working for peace."

Rory was tremendously interested and asked many

questions. He was delighted to learn that there was so much public activity throughout New York State, led by the Federalists, and indeed all through New England, against war. He was interested also in the peace movements in Quebec with which Hector was connected.

"Oh, yes, Hector is working for peace wherever he goes. In Montreal, Three Rivers and down the Fleuve too, even in Malbaie."

"Of course he has to be very careful there, for the dear old Seigneur, Colonel Fraser, is very peppery. Jason was much amused."

"Jason?" exclaimed Rory, astounded.

"Oh, yes. Last fall Hector went down the river on a fishing expedition with Jason in the 'Newport Maid.' They had a great time together."

"You like Jason?" said Rory, his eyes searching her face.

"Yes, Rory, I like Jason," she said, a quick flush on her pale face.

"Well, I must be off," cried Rory. "I am very late." He made a hurried farewell, and in a maze of wonder and grief he took his way downstairs.

"God in heaven!" he groaned. "What has come to this girl? What has happened to her mind? Jason? He has bewitched her. God help us all! Well, I am going to Albany, and if I don't dig up something about that lad I'm mistaken."

With bitter disappointment in his heart he set about the final preparations for his trip to Albany.

CHAPTER. XX

TO La Colle, a border hamlet consisting of a few scattered houses, a stone mill and a small military outpost on a muddy stream of the same name flowing into the Richelieu from the west, then to Plattsburg, the new headquarters for General Dearborn's army of the

Centre situated on a snug little harbour on the west shore of Lake Richelieu, presently humming with the saws and hammers of hundreds of workmen busy on huts for soldiers, bateaux, gunboats and ships of war, and thence far inland to Albany, the capital city of New York State, on the northern reaches of the Hudson River. This was Rory's course.

His first thought, however, on reaching the city of Albany was not of business. This city was the home of Madeleine Van Rancken. Indeed it was his deliberate purpose to meet her, for through her, for one thing, he could most easily get into touch with Jason Appleby. But, more especially, he could not forget his promises to his mother and Miss Christine. These promises he must keep at the earliest opportunity. He dreaded that interview with Madeleine, which he knew well could bring nothing but unhappiness to her, and to him agony of soul. But the meeting was inevitable.

From the newspaper reports of the political meetings which were being held almost every night in different parts of the city, he learned that Jason was in town and taking a not unimportant part in these meetings. He soon learned that Jason was one of the most active and most enthusiastic members of the young War Hawk party, a rabid advocate of war. He was, moreover, a naval officer high in the favour of Commander Rodgers, and destined to a command of importance in the American navy. Furthermore, he was deeply interested in the underground peace movement carried on in Lower Canada, one of whose most active promoters was Hector Fraser.

From the Press he also gathered that the Democratic party was steadily gaining control of public opinion. A war with Britain was inevitable, therefore it behoved all patriotic citizens to lay aside partisan feeling and to unite in bringing that war to a successful issue. That issue, as defined by leaders of the Government party, was nothing less than the driving of Great Britain from the continent

of America, and incorporating the Provinces of Canada in the great Republic.

To further this end a great mass meeting in the Armory of the National Guard was organized. This meeting Rory was determined to attend, and therefore gladly accepted an invitation secured by a business associate of Simon Fraser, an American Scot by the name of Purdie, a merchant of prominence dealing in "Flour, Feed and General Merchandise." Mr. Purdie being a loyal Federalist had no difficulty in securing two platform tickets.

"And so you will be sure of good company. You will be in the thick of governors and generals and senators and such-like, not to speak of merchant princes like myself," said Mr. Purdie, with his thumb in Rory's ribs.

"Not for me! No platform seat for me! A dark corner where I can hear and see without being observed," said Rory.

"Oh, well, I will fix that," said Purdie. "I will get you a wee neuk"—Mr. Purdie relapsed at will, and more especially when in a jovial mood, into his native Caledonian—"where ye can hide yersel' frae ony chiel takin' notes."

Mr. Purdie proved as good as his word, and Rory found himself ensconced in a platform seat suitable in every way to his purpose.

A few minutes before the hour of opening Governor Tomkins of New York State, in military dress, accompanied by his suite, also in the uniform of the United States army and of the National Guard, entered by a side door. He was immediately followed by the speakers for the evening, who were no less personages than Secretary of War Eustis, and the great Democratic orator, Henry Clay. After these had taken their places the side door opened again and Rory's heart stood still. There he beheld a vision of surpassing loveliness, Madeleine Van Rancken followed by a stout, elderly lady, both of them

arrayed in costly furs and accompanied by a very noble-looking gentleman.

"That is General Van Rensselaer and his party," whispered Purdie.

A few minutes later three young men came in and took their seats with the party, whom Rory recognized to be Jason Appleby, Max Van Rancken and Hector Fraser.

Shrinking far back into his "neuk," from which he could command a perfect view of her lovely face, Rory for some minutes was completely oblivious of all except the face of the girl who for the past two years had so utterly dominated his heart.

Mr. Purdie's nudge and whisper recalled him to his environment. "That is Senator Downie," said Mr. Purdie. "He is the chairman. Now you may expect to hear a roaring, mighty wind."

After the chairman, various speakers had their special pronouncements to make and their parties to stir. To Rory they were only sound, but when the great audience rose to greet the Secretary of War then did Rory come to himself and give heed to what was being said. It was partly for this purpose indeed he had come to Albany, and he forced himself to listen to the oratory that flowed from the Secretary of War in an eloquent and unbroken stream, conscious all the while of an acute physical pain in the region of his heart. The Secretary's speech set forth in overwhelming statistical array the military might of the great young Republic, which was destined one day to be coterminous with this continent of America, and which but three decades ago had risen in the glorious strength of its young manhood and had shaken itself free from the shackles of that decadent old-country monarchy, which was once more attempting to impose its tyrannous will upon the free people of this, your Republic.

The Secretary of War concluded his oration in a tremendous burst of eloquence which brought the whole assembly to its feet in tumultuous applause. Alone Rory kept his seat on the platform.

"Get up, man, or they'll fling you out," said Purdie.

At once Rory sprang to his feet and went through the pantomime of cheering as enthusiastically as any of them.

When the great Henry Clay took the platform Rory became immediately conscious that here was a master of oratory, but a man of intellect as well, with a wide knowledge of affairs. In his opening sentence Clay established a complete mastery over his audience, which only intensified as his stately periods marched onward to their climaxes. "Our immediate neighbours," declared the speaker in conclusion, "in the Province of Quebec, will receive us with open arms. For years they have been groaning under the oppression of a government alien in tradition, speech and religion. I have been assured, no later than this afternoon by a gentleman from Canada, who I believe is now present in this building, that the vast majority of the French Canadian people rejoice in the prospect of deliverance from the oppressive government under which they have been groaning for the last number of years. They will welcome the liberty which they will find under the flag of this Republic."

"He is a liar!"

The words rang like a trumpet blast through the hall. Without his conscious volition the words had exploded from Rory's lips. Dead silence followed the explosion. The orator paused and faced about in the direction from which this verbal bombshell had come.

"I pause for confirmation of this extraordinary statement, or for an apology," he said, looking in Rory's direction.

A single instant Rory hesitated, then, shaking himself free from Purdie's grip, he stood upon his feet, pushed his way to the platform and took his place beside Henry Clay, facing the audience, who sat watching with tense faces. Dressed in his voyageur's costume Rory stood for a few moments before the excited crowd, silent, trembling with nervous emotion. Then, turning with a bow to the

speaker, in tones clear, deliberate and penetrating to the utmost limit of the Armory, he spoke :

"I understand you to say, sir, that a Canadian gentleman at present in this building is the authority for the statement that multitudes of French Canadians, because of the tyranny under which they suffer, would gladly exchange the government of Great Britain for that of the United States."

"Yes, sir," said Henry Clay. "Those are not his words, but that is what I understand to be their purpose."

"Then, sir, I should like to modify my statement and declare that the man responsible for this statement is either a liar or a fool."

A silence more deadly than ever fell upon the audience.

"And by what authority do you assume to make this statement?"

"Sir," and Rory's head was flung back, "I am a Canadian, a French Canadian born and bred; I have lived all my life in French Canada, I know what I say to be true." He paused a moment or two, and then with a low bow he said: "I thank you, sir, for this courtesy." Once more he bowed to the orator, bowed to the audience and then turned and with some difficulty made his way through the rows of chairs on the platform to his seat. There he picked up his overcoat and cap and made his exit from the hall by the side door.

He was in a black rage, cursing himself for his lack of self-control. Behind him the latch clicked. He turned swiftly and faced Madeleine; the moonlight showed her face pale and her blue eyes flashing sparks of light.

"Oh, how could you?" she cried. "How could you so defame a man?"

"Defame a man?" he flamed. "What do you mean?"

"How could you say such a thing about Hector?"

"Hector? Damn Hector! What do I care about Hector? What do you care?"

"He is my friend," she cried in a voice quivering with indignation. "How could you say that about him? He is no traitor. I tell you. He is a noble man seeking to serve his country."

"Then he is a fool," replied Rory bitterly.

"No," she said, "he is no fool, he is a great man, and Jabez says so too."

"Jabez?" laughed Rory. "Does Jabez think that America is out to save Canada from the tyranny of Britain?"

"Yes, he does, and I do too."

Rory stared at her in blank amazement. "You think that? Does Henry Clay think that? Does any single American leader say that they are out to set up Canada as an independent Republic?"

"Yes, there are many who would gladly do that very thing. I would!"

"Does Jason think so?" asked Rory, with an ironic smile.

The girl hesitated. "No, I am afraid he doesn't."

"And you imagine," he said, speaking in a voice of pity, "that Hector thinks so?"

"Oh, he does! I know he does!" answered Madeleine eagerly.

"Then he is a fool, as I said. A fool blinded by his own hate and by his own mad ambition."

"But he is no traitor," said the girl.

"Oh," cried Rory mockingly, "what difference does it make what Hector thinks? But what do you care? That is the question you must answer."

"Must?" she said, lifting her chin.

"Yes, must! I promised my mother I would ask you, I promised her I would give you a chance to say."

"Your mother, Rory?" Her voice grew soft.

"Yes, my mother. She made me promise. 'Give her a chance,' she said."

"A chance! What chance?" said Madeleine.

Rory paused a moment, then in a wild rush his words came tumbling :

"A chance to say that you love me, a chance to say that you want to be my wife. There it is !"

"Your wife ?" she echoed in a low voice.

"Yes, my wife," said Rory with a wild laugh. "She fancies in her love for her son—her wonderful son," again came his bitter laugh, "that you were in love with me," and again came a laugh of concentrated scorn, "that you wanted to marry me."

"Oh," cried the girl, "how hateful you are ! How cruel ! How hateful ! Marry you ? No, no ! Not for all the world ! Never !"

"That is your answer then ; I thought it would be. I know it now. She will believe me. I told her I was fool enough to think that it might be so once. Me ? A habitant Canadian ?" Once more he laughed wildly. "Come ! Where can I take you ?"

"Oh, how brutal you are ! How little your mother knows you ! You publicly slander him—my best friend—and then you ask me if I want to marry you. I tell you, no !"

"Thank you," said Rory, "I have my answer. I shall tell my mother your answer. Poor soul ! Now tell me where I can take you."

They had been walking blindly down the street.

"Nowhere !" replied the girl. "What do you think I am ? Wanting to marry you ? Wanting to be your wife ? Oh !" she cried, her voice full of rage and tears ; she turned and ran away from him.

He followed her.

"Don't dare to follow me !" whirling upon him like a fury. "Never speak to me again ! But tell your mother—tell your dear, dear mother—if you are a man at all, tell her truly just what you said to me. On your honour, tell her just what you said to me."

He stood watching her as she ran, followed her, keeping

her in view till she arrived at the Armory door, saw her fumble at the latch and disappear.

"Oh, fool, fool! Cursed fool!" he muttered. "Marry you? Who would marry you?" He turned and strode blindly down the street, he knew not, he cared not whither. How long he walked he was unaware, but finally he found himself at his hotel door, entered and went to his room, packed his bag and approached the clerk at the desk.

"My bill?" he said.

"Say, boss, you ain't goin' to-night?" said the clerk with a genial smile.

"My bill?" said Rory. "Did you hear me?"

A number of men stood drinking at the bar. They were discussing the meeting. "By cripes! That's the man! That's him all right!" said one of them.

"Naw," said another, "that ain't him, he was a bigger feller than this chap."

"Say, stranger," said the first man, a huge, rough bulk of a fellow, "ain't you the feller that broke up the meeting to-night?"

Rory ignored him, busy with his bill.

"Say, young feller, can't you hear?" said the man, touching him lightly on the shoulder.

"What do you want?" asked Rory, wheeling fiercely on him.

"You're the feller that gave the lie at the meetin' to-night. Are you a Canadian?"

"I am a French Canadian."

"What did you run away for? Afraid?"

"I didn't run away," said Rory.

"Looked mighty like it," said the man with a laugh.

"Get out of my way," said Rory, in a voice of fury.

"Goin' to run away again, eh?"

For answer Rory flung down coat, whip and bag.

"Will you get out of my way?" he said in a low voice.

"Don't be so wrathful, young feller."

Rory took a single step towards him, his hand flashed

out, the man lit on his shoulders six feet away and lay quivering.

"Anyone else?" said Rory, his face white, his eyes filled with the light of madness. "Anyone else?" He picked up his impedimenta. "Good night!" he said to the clerk. "Thank you for your accommodation. If anyone else wants to ask me anything I shall be in the stable for the next ten minutes." The door closed on him.

CHAPTER XXI

IT was in a veritable spirit of war that Rory returned to Quebec. He was at war first and chiefly with himself, and consequently was at war with the world. He had his work to do, a work that led to war, and for war he longed with all his soul. It was in this mood that he entered Simon Fraser's shipyard the very day of his return to the city. He was at once aware of a new spirit abroad among the men.

Sandy Brodie, his master shipbuilder, was in despair—"I canna get the wark oot o' them," he exclaimed, after touring the ship with Rory.

"We'll see about that," said Rory grimly, and went at his men.

He was in no mood to parley or to plead. For a few days there was a slight improvement, then a notable falling off in production.

He called his time-clerk, Alain, into his office. "Alain," he said, "what is getting into the men? Why is the work falling behind so? They are loafing half their time."

Alain was silent.

"Can you not give me a reason?"

"I want to get out of this," said Alain sullenly.

"That would be better. You can go home to-morrow."

"Never can I go home again ! Never do I want to see them again ! I cannot go," he cried, in a burst of passion and grief. "Josette would tear my eyes out."

"Yes !" said Rory. "You would be shamed to look her in the face because you have not played the game with me. I am disappointed with you, so you must go. I cannot have a traitor with me. You will get your money to-morrow."

"Keep your money," Alain burst forth. "Money ? It is nothing to me."

"You will get your money, Alain," said Rory, "but before you go you must answer me this. Have I ever treated you unfairly since you came to Quebec ?"

"No, never," cried the boy.

"I shall be seeing Josette and your people, and I should be sorry to think that I could not say to them I had treated you fairly."

The boy remained silent, his lips trembling, his fingers twitching.

"That's all, Alain. You are my cousin. You are really my brother, but in these days even that can't stand in the way of duty."

"Duty ?" Alain cried. "Ah, yes ! That's it ! Ah, sac-r-r-r-é ! Do I not know that ? It is for that I cannot work with you. It is not possible. No more !" The young man was now shaking with great sobs. "No ! I have made one oath, it is pour la patrie. Ah, mon Dieu ! It is to die !"

"Don't be a fool, Alain, and speak English. You are no habitant. Speak your father's tongue." Rory's voice was full of contempt.

"Ah, mon Dieu ! You despise me. I am not English. I am habitant. I am catholique. I am for my country."

"Oh, get out, you young idiot ! Are you calling me a traitor ? Get out of my sight ! What do you know about your country ? Go ! I can't stand a fool."

Still sobbing deep, body-shaking sobs, Alain rushed from the room.

"That's Hector's work," Rory growled through his teeth. "He has his agents here. Well, by the Lord that made me, I will wipe them out!"

In his blackest mood Rory visited the workshop next day, with his eyes open for trouble. As he was passing along beside the saws driven by horse-power he found a group of men idle.

"What does this mean?" he cried. "Why are you not working, Leon?"

"One can't work without a saw," said Leon coolly. "The saw is broken."

Rory looked the saw over. "Who was running this saw?" he demanded.

"Me," answered Leon. "The saw struck a knot and broke."

"You mean to tell me the saw broke because it struck a knot?"

"Evidently," replied Leon, with a shrug.

Rory examined the break. There was no flaw visible. "This saw has cut through lots of knots, no knot could break this saw."

Leon's answer was a shrug of indifference.

"Very well, we shall do this work by hand until the saw is repaired. Take these logs to the saw-pit and get at them by hand."

Leon did not move.

"Do you hear me?"

"I heard!"

"Then move!"

"I don't care to do the work of a horse."

"Then," said Rory in a fury, "get out of this shop at once."

"Bien! At my convenience," said Leon.

"No! Now and quick!"

Leon stood with his hands in his pockets.

Rory leaped at him, caught him by the collar of his buckskin shirt, and hurled him backward over a pile of lumber.

Like a cat Leon rose to his feet, and like a cat came slowly towards Rory. "You put your hand on Leon Tremblay," he said in a voice hoarse with passion. "The man that puts his hand on Leon Tremblay cannot live."

"Get out of this shed!" cried Rory. "And quick!"

Leon continued his cat-like movements, circling round him, then suddenly leaped. But Rory easily avoided his leap and swinging upon him as he passed caught him in the ear. Leon pitched forward into the sawdust.

But again he was on his feet and coming.

"You would, would you?" said Rory, flinging his self-control to the winds. "I know you, Tremblay, I have had my eye on you for some time, and now I am going to settle with you. I give you one more chance. Will you take your chance and go out on your own feet? If not, they will carry you out feet first. Will you go?"

Leon paused a moment as if considering the matter. Then with a sudden resolve he came again with the terrible *lache* of the fighting voyageur. But Rory knew that trick and every other trick of the rough-and-tumble fighter of the camp. Besides, he had learned to be master of his hands. In three minutes Leon with his face battered to a bleeding pulp lay insensible.

"Carry him out!" shouted Rory, beside himself with rage. "You! And you! And you! The rest of you get to the saw. Jump!"

And jump they certainly did.

Throughout the shed a hundred men had watched the encounter. A workman with mallet and chisel in his hands stood gaping.

"Get to your work," ordered Rory, moving swiftly towards him with an aspect so terrible that the man sprang to his bench and to his task. All through the shop everyone, and with feverish haste, got to their various jobs.

After dinner hour in the eating-shed Rory called all the workmen together, his mood of black fury still upon him.

"I have one thing to say, and only one," he said.

"The men who are prepared to give me their best work pass through that door." With rigid arm and finger he pointed to the door leading to the workshop. "The men who are not prepared to give me their best work get out through that door." His rigid arm pointed to the exit to the street. "But before you go, if any man thinks he can fight me, come up and stand before me now."

No man moved.

"Listen, you dogs, if any two men think they can fight me, let them come up now." Still no man moved. "Then get to your work."

At once there was a prompt movement towards the workshop door. Beside the door Rory, face white and eyes aflame, stood watching the men as they filed past.

"Polydore ! Arsène ! Théophile ! Damase ! Aristide !" and so on he went, calling his foremen. "Come into the office."

With anxious, uneasy eyes his foremen stood gazing at their boss in the office.

"You have not kept these men at their work. Why not ?"

"Oh, mon capitaine ! What can one do ?" answered Polydore. "They will not."

"Kill them !" shouted Rory. "There is a war coming. It is swiftly moving towards us. I have seen their soldiers marching. Let us begin a war here and now. The man refusing to work is an enemy to his country and to me. Throw him out ! If he refuses to go, kill him !"

"Is that all, mon capitaine ?"

"That is all. Go ! If you can't get these men to give me their best work you are all no use to me."

By the second day the work at the shop was going again at top speed. True, Polydore Hammel had the great joy of seeing three men carried out of the workshop feet first. "C'est la guerre !" was his only remark as he dealt with them one by one.

A week later Hector returned. Immediately in his

home there was a complete change of attitude and of spirit, and on the occasion of his first visit Rory became acutely conscious of it. Madame Fraser was distinctly chilly in her greeting. Héloïse was puzzled and distraught. Even Simon was in a doubtful mood. Hector himself was not present that night, but after a few minutes Rory began to feel that his presence in that house was no longer possible. With a heart full of bitterness he made his farewell and left the Fraser drawing-room, not to return till many months had passed, until he and they had suffered terrible experiences.

Simon, however, followed him from the room. "Come into the office, lad," he said. And there, man to man, the old man and the young talked their hearts out one to the other.

"These are the facts, Cousin Simon, as I remember them. You will take my word for it that I speak truly. I confess to you that I was carried away by rage, and let the words loose like a fool. But when I heard that great American leader addressing three thousand American people and quoting a Canadian for the statement that multitudes of my countrymen here were anxious to change British for American rule, something burst in my head and I was ready to kill."

"Ay," said Simon sadly. "These are killing days, but I don't understand, Roy, why you told me not long ago that you did not believe Hector could be untrue to his country."

"Understand me, Simon, I am not accusing Hector of treachery, I am accusing him of being a fool, for any man who thinks that any large number of my fellow-French Canadians hope to establish an independent Government with the help of the United States of America is a fool. Hector, I grant you, is sincere enough, but he has allowed his hatred of Britain, and, I will add, his ambition, to bind him."

"And Jason, what of him?" asked Simon.

"Jason! Cousin Simon, I am speaking honestly. You

are the only man in the world I can call my friend, perhaps after to-day I can no longer call you that, but I must speak truly. Jason is an American to the core of his heart. I don't blame him for his enthusiasm. He is a naval officer, he holds a high place in the regard of Commodore Rodgers. He is ambitious and he hates Britain. He has a great admiration for Hector, and I believe he is madly in love with Héloïse. But no man sees more clearly the mad folly of Hector's dream, but he wants to hold Hector and to use Hector, so he joins in the chant 'Emancipation, not Conquest.'"

"I have feared so," groaned Simon. "God help me, what can I do? My son and my daughter, I have lost them both! What can I do? What can I do?"

"Cousin Simon," said Rory, "I am a young man and at times a fool, but if I might offer you my opinion it is this. At the first real touch of war, this dream of Hector's will utterly fade like a mist before the sun. Give us two months of war and there will not be an advocate of independence left in Canada, nor will there be a living American that will suggest anything but the incorporating of Canada into the American Union."

"Lad," said Simon, "I believe you have the truth. If we can only save the boy in the meantime from some mad act of folly that will compromise him! Rory, promise me this. You will help me to save Hector. I am asking much from you, I know. Oh, I am not blind to the fact that you both love the same girl. I am asking you to help me to save my son. Will you do this?"

"Cousin Simon, it is not a hard thing you ask me. I don't hate Hector, and, as for Madeleine, I have given up that folly. She is not for me."

"Then, Rory, will you listen to me and I will tell you what has been long upon my mind. I have a very large business; how much will survive the war I cannot tell, but it has been in my mind to associate you with myself. You have two great gifts for the making of a business man: you are loyal to the heart, and so men trust you; and you

have the power of persuading men to your will. If we both come through the war it is still my purpose to associate you with me. Hector will have his own share, and if this marriage goes through he will need little help from his father. That is my purpose and that is my offer," said Simon, holding out his hand to Rory.

Silently Rory seized the offered hand. "I cannot speak to you, Cousin Simon," he said, "except to say this, that you have given me to-day the thing I most needed in the world, the confidence of a man I respect above all other men, and I would like to think, too, the love."

"You have used the word, Rory," answered Simon. "It is a hard word to get a Scot to use. But the thing that is in my heart to you I can call by no other word. You are as a son to me."

They stood gazing into each other's eyes for a few moments. There were no further words between them.

CHAPTER XXII

TOWARDS the end of March the Governor summoned the Legislature of Quebec. The members of the House of Assembly came together with a certain amount of trepidation, but to their amazed delight, and to the delight of the whole country, the Assembly fell under the spell of the new Governor's persuasive oratory, and finished their work with complete harmony. A Militia Bill was passed by which every male in the country, between sixteen and sixty, was liable to military service. This produced a Sedentary Militia enrolment of 60,000 from which by ballot an embodied militia could be selected giving a force of 13,500 men, ready for immediate military service. In addition a large sum of money was voted for defence. The whole country was proud of its Legislature and loud in the praise of its affable and courteous Governor-General.

Following the passing of the Militia Act there was an

immediate revival of enlistment. The cities of Quebec, Three Rivers and Montreal vied with one another in their military ardour. Not so, however, the country parishes. In a few weeks the enrolment for the Sedentary Militia in the country districts came to a halt. Indeed Rory reported to the Governor, from different parishes, open opposition to recruiting. The most conspicuous example of this open resistance was found in Pointe Claire in the vicinity of Montreal. But a riot of disaffected habitants there was easily suppressed, with the loss of only one life—that of the ex-priest, Leon Tremblay. And there was no further trouble when that stormy spirit was at rest.

Towards the end of May Louise Vallières and Madeleine Van Rancken, accompanied by her brother, Max, who had reasons of his own for the visit, had arrived at Malbaie to pay a long-promised visit to Miss Christine Nairne, who was confined to her home with a sharp attack of rheumatism.

"Now, my dear," said Miss Christine, when they were for the first time alone in her boudoir. "I am dying for news. I want all the scandal of the Château of course, but first I want to hear about your love affairs, you bad girl. I am quite disgusted with your dilly-dallying as you do."

"Dilly-dallying? Me? Not me! my dear," cried Madeleine gaily, holding up her third finger, on which glittered a very splendid ring.

"Why, my dear girl! How did he ever muster up the courage? He is such a stupid gowk of a boy."

"Courage? Indeed Hector has never lacked courage," said Madeline with a gay laugh.

Miss Christine's face went white.

"Oh, my God! Hector!"

"And why not Hector?" said Madeleine, her head high in the air.

"But, Madeleine, you don't love Hector. Don't you dare to say so." She caught the girl's arm in a grip that

reached the bone. "Tell me," she said, shaking her, "tell me in God's name, in God's sight, you do not love Hector Fraser."

The girl, white and trembling, for a moment or two could not find words. Then finally she twisted her arm free from Miss Christine's grip and with cheeks flaming with sudden red she cried :

"How dare you ask such a question ! You insult me ! I will not allow you to speak to me so."

For a long moment Miss Christine let her eyes rest upon the girl's flushed face.

"You need not answer, Madeleine," she said at length. "Oh, fool ! A little pride ! A little anger ! A little spite ! And then years of slow heartache and unavailing regret. Do you see these lines, these grey hairs. Not age, but the slow agony of a breaking heart. Leave me for a little. God pity and help you !"

The red flush of anger faded from the younger girl's face, the blood ebbed slowly from her cheeks. Fear, dismay, horror looked through the wide blue eyes, but no words could she find. Slowly she turned and left the room.

But an hour later when she met the family circle at the tea-table she carried her head high, her eyes were alight, her cheeks glowing, her voice buoyant with gladness.

Miss Christine was not deceived, the girl was travelling a path too well known to her. But she forbore to ask further questions in the meantime.

Later in the evening, as Miss Christine was about to retire, in answer to a bell there came into her room a little lady dressed in black with a fichu of white muslin crossed on her breast. When in the soft habitant speech the little lady addressed Madeleine all the girl's pride passed out of her face.

"Oh, it is you," she said, with a catch in her voice, and stood trembling.

"The last time I saw you, you greeted me with a kiss," said the little lady gently.

"May I?" asked Madeleine, and stooping kissed her on either cheek.

"Mrs. Fraser is helping to take care of me," said Miss Christine. "No one has hands like her hands. The pain flies before her fingers."

Meantime the little lady's black eyes had been searching Madeleine's pale face. "You are not well, my dear," she said.

"And serves her right too," said Miss Christine. "She's got herself engaged to Hector Fraser, think of that!"

Swiftly the hands of the little lady went to her breast, swiftly her black eyes went to the girl's face. "You are not happy," she said gently. "You do not love him. I will pray for you." And from the room she slipped like a shadow.

"Poor dear," said Miss Christine. "She is much disturbed, and no wonder. But I am not going to worry myself. But—perhaps—if someone had helped me—I might have been spared long years of sorrow. No! Not a word! Don't speak to me! And you need not lie to me—not more than you have to."

At this point the young Seigneur came in with Miss Louise Vallières.

"Tell me some gossip," insisted Miss Christine. "I am dying for scandal. They say the new Governor is very charming and popular with the ladies."

But somehow the talk ever drifted back to the war.

"What will be the result of it?" asked Miss Christine.

"It will be independence for Canada, of course," said Madeleine. "That is what we wish."

"Listen to me," cried Mademoiselle Louise indignantly. "This foolish enfant is replete with one *idée fixe*. Independence! Imagine to be in the hands of the canaille of Quebec. Not for me! Sooner would I go out with a rifle myself." Miss Louise was much excited.

"Hooray!" cried Seigneur Tom, looking at the girl with great admiration.

"Independence! Why," said Miss Christine, "this young lady is trying to make us believe that her American friends have only one purpose in war, the independence of Canada from British rule."

"All my friends say so," Madeleine insisted.

"My dear young lady," said Tom, "let us talk about the phases of the moon, about which you and I know a great deal more than we do about independence. Phut! My dear young lady, the talk of independence for Canada is sheer nonsense, and for two very good and sufficient reasons. First, we French Canadians, and English as well, do not want it, and second, you Americans would not think of giving it to us. I need not add a third and very sufficient reason, namely, that Great Britain will have something to say about it. Only fools, Canadian fools I mean," said Tom, with a gallant bow to Madeleine, "talk of this, and very few of them. I venture to say," continued Tom, "that your brother here, whom I discover to be a sensible young man, has no faith in the American purpose to help Canada to independence."

"I cannot say that I agree with my sister in this," said Max. "Certainly the American Government has no such idea in its mind."

After they had retired to their various rooms, Madeleine in her night-robe slipped in again to Miss Christine's bedside.

"Do not hate me," she whispered, with her arms round Christine's neck. "Do not hate me."

"How can I hate you, my dear?" said Miss Christine.

"And do not think I am unhappy. Hector is really a very splendid man. And so good to me."

"Heugh! Good to you! Good night, you little fool."

CHAPTER XXIII

JOSETTE'S first duty on her return to the city was to find her brother, Alain. This was no easy matter. Her aunt knew nothing of his doings and goings. Father Le Blanc, the family confessor, had lost touch with him. The students of the College had not seen him for a fortnight.

"Hector will know," said Josette to Rory. "If I could only find Hector."

"I may find him for you," said Rory, and went straight to Héloïse.

Héloïse received him with a heart full of grateful love.

"Hector has told me," she said. "He has told me and he has no blame for you, but it is terribly sad for us. Yes, I know where Alain is. He is acting as coureur for Hector between Albany and this country. Oh, it is all mad folly, and I think Hector himself is beginning to see, but he is desperately proud and he hates to acknowledge defeat. The new Governor has killed the independence movement in this country by his generous treatment of the French people. But about Alain, the boy is mad for Hector, but he is very unhappy and chiefly because of you. I expect him to-night. I will have him meet you in Father's office. I am sorry I cannot ask you to come here. Poor dear maman, you must not blame her."

"Blame her?" said Rory. "She has only one son. Thank you for your help, Héloïse, I shall meet Alain to-night."

It was not hard to persuade Alain to abandon the independence movement. He was thoroughly sick of it, and had already begun to realize its futility.

"I will give you something worth while doing. The Governor wants coureurs to carry despatches to Upper Canada. There is not a better runner in the country than you, Alain, and I know I can trust you."

"Trust me," murmured the boy, with a sudden break in his voice.

"Yes, Alain! The past is done. Your head went wrong, but your heart was always right."

So Josette went back to Malbaie with her heart at rest about her brother, and Rory to his bateaux transportation to the Richelieu and the Upper St. Lawrence.

Very doubtful of himself and with little interest in life, Alain took up the new work assigned him. Arduous it was and almost without rest. The trails were thick these days with coureurs carrying cautionary despatches from the Governor to General Brock in Upper Canada, and bringing back respectful and diplomatic replies from Brock, who was gradually learning the wisdom of reporting to the Governor his plans, after they were well on their way to completion.

On the first of June, 1812, President Madison signed the War Bill, passed by Congress. On the 18th of June he signed the Declaration of War against Great Britain.

Some twelve days later Rory, recalled from the Richelieu Valley by an order from the Governor-General, dropped into Simon Fraser's office to find that gentleman in a state of tremendous excitement.

"Look at this!" cried Simon, spreading open before Rory's eyes a letter from a business correspondent in the town of Niagara, Upper Canada. "Look at this!"

Rory glanced at it. "Good heavens!" he cried. "It has come! It is war!" He read further in the letter. "We have been at war for twelve days."

"Come with me," said Simon. "We will go to His Excellency."

The Governor-General read Simon's letter with unmoved countenance.

"Yes," he said, "a similar letter reached me two days ago from my friend, Mr. McGillivray of Forsythe, Richardson & Co., Montreal. This, of course, is not an official notice. Besides, I fully expect by the next ship the announcement of the rescinding of the Orders-in-

Council. I cannot believe the American Government will seriously contemplate entering hostilities in such a case. We must therefore still use every effort to prevent the actual outbreak of war. As a matter of fact, I have just despatched an order to General Brock urging upon him the propriety of solely defensive operations. We must make every effort to prevent war."

"Sir," said Simon Fraser, rising to his feet, "I ask no permission to say it : before God, it is your duty, and the duty of all the subjects of Britain, with all the power at our command, to make war. Anything else is criminal madness."

"I cannot accept your judgment, sir," replied the Governor. "Good day."

Amazed, blind with rage, they left the Governor-General's presence and returned to Simon's office. There they found Alain waiting with a bundle of correspondence from Upper Canada for Simon.

"Ah," cried Simon, seizing a large blue envelope and cutting it open, "from my old friend, James Fairbairn of York. There will be news in this." As he read his old face began to glow, his eyes to gleam. Before he had read a full page his excitement overcame him. He sprang to his feet, smashed his fist upon the desk and cried :

"Thank God ! There at least is a man ! Read this ! Read this ! Read it out, lad, if you can."

The letter contained a fragmentary but vivid outline of General Brock's reaction to the news of the war just received.

"June 26th. General Brock at York received letter sent by Mr. J. J. Astor of New York to Mr. Thomas Clark of Niagara announcing the declaration of war. Within four hours two companies of the 41st are despatched in boats to Niagara. A meeting of the Council is summoned. An extra session of the Legislature is called. Brock himself embarks with his Brigadier Major Evans and his aide-de-camp Captain Clegg of Fort George, Niagara, in an open boat thirty miles across the lake. An order is des-

patched to Captain Roberts at St. Joseph's Isle to give effect to orders already in his hands for the capture of Fort Michilimackinac. June 27th. From Niagara a general order is issued to all commanding officers with instructions for disposition of troops, etc. A meeting of the officers of all ranks and all forces called at Niagara. The general plan of campaign already prepared and agreed upon set in motion."

"What do you think of that for two days' work?" cried Simon. "Thank God we have a man of action in this country."

Rory read the letter through with shining eyes.

"What a man to serve!" he said. He glanced at the date of the letter. "Why, Alain, this letter is only four days old. How under the sun did you make the trip in that time?"

"A sloop on Lake Ontario, three horses, three bateaux and a night's running," said Alain.

"By gad! That is great running, boy," said Rory.

"Rory," said Simon solemnly, "I should like to have you read that letter aloud to the Governor, if you dare."

"If I dare?" cried Rory. "I should like to stuff it down his throat."

"Come away, then," said Simon. "We will be doing that same thing, in a figurative way of course."

The Governor was apparently much surprised and not a little disturbed at the reappearance of his two visitors, who with such scant courtesy had left him only a few minutes earlier.

"There is a letter here, your Excellency," said Simon, in his grandest and most courteous manner. "There is a private letter here which has just come by courier from Niagara, which I think you would be delighted to read. It will save time, perhaps, if my young friend should read a part of it to you."

The Governor bowed courteously and said, "Read."

In a voice thrilling with emotion and trembling with his excitement, Rory read aloud the impressive list of

acts performed by General Brock within the twenty-four hours after he had received the news of the declaration of war.

The Governor-General listened with careful attention.

"Ah," he said, "General Brock is an officer of great energy. Somewhat precipitate, however. I do hope that nothing will be done to provoke hostilities."

Simon Fraser rose to his feet. "And I hope to God," he said, "that General Brock will continue to fulfil in the same manner his duty to his King and country."

"Of course," said the Governor, ignoring Simon's outburst, "I shall summon the Legislature in a few weeks."

"A few weeks ! A few weeks and war at our doors ! Sir," implored Simon, "why not immediately, as soon as it is possible ?"

"Mr. Fraser, your eager loyalty does you credit. But diplomacy demands careful study of the whole situation."

Simon left him with a profound bow.

With a letter to Miss Christine, Rory despatched Alain to Malbaie.

"Take two days' rest," he said. "You have earned it and you need it. We shall have something for you on your return."

The news of the declaration of war had not yet penetrated to that village. Miss Christine's visitors were still lingering in the delightful surroundings of Malbaie.

The advent of Alain injected a new element into the peaceful atmosphere of this lovely and remote seigneury. He had been allowed to carry with him the momentous war letter received by Simon Fraser. It was as if a live bomb had fallen upon the roof of the Nairne Manor household. The fact of war obliterated all other considerations, transformed their relations one to another and disrupted all their plans.

"How can I most speedily reach Quebec ?" asked Max of the young Seigneur.

"My sail-boat would be at your disposal, but I shall need it myself as soon as I can make arrangements for my departure," replied Tom.

"There is Alain's boat," said his sister. "Why not go with him?"

And so it was arranged. Alain was due to leave for Quebec within twenty-four hours. Those twenty-four hours were charged with momentous issues for several members of the party. Tom Nairne had many duties calling for immediate attention, but these did not prevent a final stroll with Miss Louise by the banks of the Malbaie river.

As for Max, he disappeared from the Nairne household in the early forenoon for a final exploration of the summit of Cap à l'Aigle in which Josette had promised to be his guide.

Leaving these two parties to their own devices, Miss Christine kept Alain beside her for the greater part of the day, listening to his recital of the stirring events taking place in Upper Canada which it had been his privilege to witness, and which he described with dramatic vigour to the ladies of the Nairne household.

CHAPTER XXIV

MENTION of Hector's name by Miss Christine brought from Alain an inquiry :

"Does anybody know where Hector is?"

After a moment's hesitation Madeleine made reply :

"Hector is in Albany."

"I wish he could see Brock in action," said the boy.

"I wish he could see these people of Upper Canada. The whole world is different to me now. I used to think Canada was Quebec, that Canadians were French ; I know now that Canada is bigger than Quebec and that there are English as well as French Canadians."

Early next morning Alain and his party set off on their

return to the city. Tom became almost hilarious at the prospect of early military service. Max with sober face and set jaw was silent as usual.

"Is he happy, Josette?" whispered Miss Christine to the girl.

"Not quite," replied Josette, with a little smile. "But he is only a boy," she added, a note of pity in her voice.

But when Madeleine was saying good-bye she clung weeping to Miss Christine.

"Oh, this cruel war!" she moaned; "but you will love me always. I could not bear it if you ceased to love me."

"Of course I will love you," said Christine. "What difference does war make to love? But, my dear, my love is not enough for you."

To this Madeleine made no reply, only clung more closely.

On August 1st the Quebec Legislature met in Session. With a unanimity that amazed themselves and the whole country as well, they passed, with practical unanimity, what was known as the Army Bills Act. By this Act the Legislature authorized the issue of \$1,250,000, for war expenditure, guaranteeing an annual interest of \$7,500. These Army Bills running from \$2,500 upward never for a day lost their face value. Indeed they acquired a 5-per-cent. premium over gold. It was an astonishing achievement.

The enthusiasm of the Legislature was reflected throughout the whole country. The enrolment of the militia proceeded with the utmost celerity.

During the campaign of 1812 the fighting was confined chiefly to Upper Canada, reports of which were carried by runners to Montreal and Quebec and disseminated among the people by means of the Press, and through private correspondence. The business letters of almost every merchant became budgets of war news as well. Simon Fraser's store was transformed into a bureau of war intelligence. Every Friday night the store was packed

with eager habitants waiting for war news through Simon's business letters.

The budget of the evening of August 21st brought a record of victories for the British troops beyond the wildest hopes of the most optimistic of the British. The record was without comment and took the form of a catalogue, terse and statistical, of the happenings of the war.

The unbelievable news of the capture of Fort Detroit turned out to be true. The amazement of the American army was hardly less than that of the British themselves. The "exterminating" General had discovered, to the Government that had appointed him, his utter incapacity and his total lack of courage.

Hence it came that on an early day in September, through the crowded streets of Montreal, General Hull and his captured troops were paraded to the ironic strains of "Yankee Doodle." But the party had not proceeded far until the indignation of many of the citizens of Montreal found expression in a vigorous protest by a young militia officer, who approached the leader of the band and urged a change of tune.

"It is not the fault of these soldiers that they are here," said the young officer. "It is a shame that they should have to bear this humiliation due not to any fault of theirs, but to the weak and cowardly conduct of their commanding officer."

Immediately the music was changed and the party proceeded down the street to the strains of the regimental march of the gallant 49th, accompanied by the cheers of the generous-hearted populace of Montreal.

"Who is that youngster?" inquired the officer in charge.

"Oh, he is a young French Canadian, Lieutenant Papineau."

"Well, he is the right stuff, by gad!" said the officer.

The young Seigneur of Malbaie was granted a few days' leave on the occasion of his visit to Montreal. He was fortunate enough to meet Red Rory, who happened to be

in the city with Simon Fraser's yacht the "Firefly," and who gladly offered to transport him to his home in Malbaie.

The meeting of Tom Nairne with his family was full of mingled emotion of joy and grief, of pride and fear ; but when the time came for the lady of the Manor to bid her son farewell she showed herself worthy of the finest traditions of her race. Grief there was that left her face as pale as that of the dead, but there were no tears.

"Good-bye, my son," she said, with solemn benediction. "I leave you in God's keeping ! come life, come death, you will be safe."

Nor could anyone persuade her but that she would see her son's face no more.

A month later Captain Thomas Nairne, declining an offer of his retirement on half-pay, for which some months previously he had made application, accepted a command in Brock's own regiment, the gallant 49th, and was placed in charge of the transport between Kingston and Montreal.

The Armistice, which closed on the 17th of September, brought disaster to the British cause. For whereas the force opposing General Brock at Queenston before the Armistice numbered 700 men, after the Armistice, such were the one-sided terms agreed to by General Prevost, the force opposing Brock at Queenston numbered 7,000 men. Nevertheless, with unabated zeal and courage Brock set himself to the seemingly desperate task of defending a frontier of thirty-six miles along a narrow river, with some 1,200 soldiers assisted by about 300 Indians, against the threatened invasion of about 8,000 troops.

On the 17th October Alain McNab, his face white and stricken, stumbled into Simon Fraser's store with his budget of despatches. The boy looked older by ten years.

With shaking fingers he handed Simon his budget and sank trembling upon a box close by. One of the letters was heavily edged with black.

"You are fair done, lad," said Simon kindly. "Airdrie, a glass of the Drumforgie for Alain here."

Airdrie hesitated, glancing round upon the assembled company.

"At once!" ordered Simon in a voice not to be disobeyed, and Airdrie brought forth with some reluctance the precious draught. "Now the Lord preserve us," said Simon, as he took the black-edged letter in his hand. "What can be the meaning of this emblem of woe?"

The men filling the store in expectation of news from the weekly budget stood in awed silence, waiting the breaking of the seal.

A single sentence Simon read, and let the letter fall from his hand. "Now God pity us," he said brokenly. "He is dead! General Brock is dead!"

The silence in the room was an eloquent tribute to the memory of the great soldier, who had made for himself a name with Canadians of every race that would never fade.

With trembling hands Simon lifted again the letter and read to the close. "There has been a victory," he said, "a great victory at Queenston. The invaders attacking in overwhelming numbers were driven back with heavy losses. But God pity us, and God help us! General Brock is no more! Now what will Canada do?"

"Fight on!" cried young Alain, springing to his feet. "It is what every soldier in Upper Canada says. *Sacrr-r-é tonnerre! Vive la guerre!*" he shouted, flinging his hand above his head.

The word was like a torch to powder.

"*Vive la guerre!*"

"*Revanche!*"

"*Vive le général Brock!*"

In many tones and with varied exclamations the habitants expressed their deep emotions.

General Brock was English of the English. They were French, but this man had died for Canada, and in sharing this great loss they were neither French nor English, just Canadians. It was the beginning of a united Canada.

"Come with me to dinner," said Simon, putting his arm about the lad, and leading him off to his house.

There, in the presence of Madame Fraser and Héloïse, Alain recited the story of the fight at Queenston. He had been a runner for Brock during the fight. With all the passionate and dramatic fervour of his race, the boy poured forth his tale.

When he had finished, Madame Fraser ran to him with hands outstretched and, taking him in her arms, cried in her own tongue :

"My boy, my boy ! You have a hero's heart, but you are an artist as well. You make your story live in my heart. Oh, Simon," she cried, turning to her husband, "if only Hector could have heard that."

"Ah !" groaned Simon. "If he could only have heard that."

That Hector was not in this conflict for his country was an ever-growing grief and shame to Simon Fraser and the members of his family.

CHAPTER XXV

THE war had been in progress for nearly five months, but its operations had been confined entirely to Upper Canada. On the Quebec frontier there was great activity. General Dearborn, the Commander-in-Chief of the American forces, was himself an old man, and though a soldier of the Revolutionary war, had never received any training to speak of in military affairs. This proved to him a very serious handicap in his position as general executive of the American land forces. In addition to this he was excessively fat, so much so indeed that he found it difficult to secure a horse of sufficient strength to carry him, and having found such a horse it was with great difficulty that he could mount him, and having mounted him he found it almost impossible to remain in the saddle more than an hour or two at a time.

Indeed a special carriage had to be built for him to enable him to accompany the army upon its movements.

General Dearborn, after abandoning Greenbush, his first Headquarters, and the mob of patriotic men assembled there for military service from different parts of the United States, selected Plattsburg as battle Headquarters and there proceeded to make and shape the Army of the North, whose objective was the Canadian border, though at what point the incursion should be made into the enemy's country was as yet uncertain.

During the five months which he spent in practising army manœuvres, and in preparing his soldiers for active warfare, the people of Quebec were kept in a continuous state of anxiety, uncertain as to the point at which the coming blow would fall. Governor Prevost was doubtful whether the attack should come from Plattsburg, overland to a point on the St. Lawrence river near Montreal, or whether it was Dearborn's purpose to effect a junction with the left wing of his great army now quartered at Sacketts Harbour, busily engaged in constructing bateaux for the descent of the St. Lawrence to Isle Peirot, from which point the united forces would deliver the blow.

In consultation with Major de Salaberry, who was entrusted with the defence of that section of the frontier directly fronting the city of Montreal, he resolved to despatch Red Rory to the American border to gather such information as he could as to General Dearborn's plans and purposes.

"I give you *carte blanche*," said the Governor, "but I suggest that you visit first Burlington, which I understand is becoming a very large and important depot for military store and equipment, then Plattsburg, which is the training camp for General Dearborn's army, and if necessary Albany itself."

When Simon Fraser learned of Rory's mission he brought him into his office. "You are going to Albany," he said.

"That I don't know," replied Rory, "but the Governor suggests that a visit to that city might be necessary."

"Hector is in Albany," said Simon, "and his mother is breaking her heart about him. We hear very seldom from him. If he were only at the war she would be content. It is the shame of it, together with the terrible uncertainty, that is breaking her heart."

"Does Hector wish to return?" asked Rory.

"That I cannot say, but from his letters it is easy to see that he carries an unhappy heart. He is coming to see," Simon continued, "the folly of his dream of independence for Canada. The Pointe Claire fiasco opened his eyes to a certain extent. Oh, I know all about that, Rory, and the Governor knows it too."

"What would Hector do if he returned? Would the Governor trust him with any position?"

"I feel sure he would," said Simon. "He practically told me so."

"Hector does not like me," said Rory. "In fact I am afraid he hates me."

"I think he has changed in that regard too, but I wish you could drop in and see Hector's mother before you go."

"Oh," said Rory, "I can hardly do that. You know how she feels towards me."

"Rory, there is a change there also. Her heart is weary with grief. Would you not come home with me?" The old man's face was lined with grief.

"I will come," said Rory.

And that night after nearly five months' absence he entered again Simon Fraser's house. The change in the lady of the house shocked Rory inexpressibly. Madame Fraser appeared for the first time in her life an aged and broken woman. All her gay sprightliness was gone, she walked feebly, leaning heavily on her staff, and out of her eyes peered a wistful and anxious soul.

Héloïse, too, had lost much of the vivacity of manner that had marked her for the last year. The lines of anxiety and grief were plainly visible on her face too.

After dinner they sat for a time round the fire talking about the one subject ever uppermost in their minds, the war.

"Simon tells me that you are going to Albany," said Madame Fraser.

"It is possible that I may go to Albany," he said.

"Oh, if it is possible," she said, "if you could only see Hector. He is very unhappy. He is very disappointed and I believe just longing to return home, but he cannot find a way. But if you could see him, could tell him how we long for him and you could persuade him to come!"

"Yes, Rory," said Héloïse. "And Jason would help you in that."

Rory was not too sure about Jason, but he could not add to this girl's grief by telling her so.

"I will go to Albany," he said, "and I will see Hector and tell him that you—that you all want him home."

"Oh, would you?" cried Madame Fraser, the tears springing to her eyes. "I would bless you for that, I would keep you ever in my prayers."

"And you may assure him, Rory," said Simon, "that there will be no difficulty with the Government. I can promise him that."

Rory experienced little difficulty in making his entry either to the depot at Burlington or to the camp at Plattsburg; both were apparently wide open to any who cared to enter. There was an almost entire lack of military order or discipline. Soldiers came and went individually and by companies according to their will, and Rory had no difficulty in securing what information he desired, as far as such information was known to the soldiers or officers of the army.

After a week in each camp, Rory proceeded to Albany, the capital city of New York State.

The war so far had brought to the American people nothing but humiliation. A long list of reverses, some of them attended with disgraceful exhibitions of incompetence and cowardice on the part of the officers, had

marked the whole course of the war till the present time. At St. Regis for the first time victory had perched upon the banners of the American army. Now the tide had turned and Albany was registering its passionate and patriotic delight at the first victory attained by the army of the Republic.

As Rory stood among the crowd lining the street he tried to gather information in regard to the victory achieved. There was little definite knowledge to be had.

"Here they are," cried a voice, as the sound of music came floating down the street. With banners flying and regimental bands blaring, the State troops came, leading the procession. Following them Major Young, the officer commanding the victorious column, bearing aloft the "captured stand of colours" which turned out to be a rather small British ensign. Then came the captured voyageurs.

As Rory turned away from the procession he felt a touch upon his arm, and turning beheld the face of Madeleine. Placing her finger upon her lips she whispered :

"Come with me."

He followed her into a quiet street, when she turned to him anxiously.

"What are you doing here, Rory? Don't you know you are in great danger? Many people might recognize you. You should not be here. Oh, why did you come here?" Her face was pale and full of anxiety.

"I came to see Hector," he replied briefly.

"Hector? What do you want with Hector?"

"I want him to come home where he belongs. His father, his mother, his sister are grieving their hearts out for him. What is he doing here?"

"Oh, he is doing nothing. He is very unhappy, he is very disappointed."

"Can I see him?" asked Rory.

"Oh, Rory, it would be dangerous for you. Jason is here, he is about our house a great deal, and since things have been going so badly for our armies he is in a terrible

mood. In particular, he is enraged at the looseness of discipline which allows spies to go everywhere through the camps, and even in Albany here. He says he will get the next spy hanged. Oh, he is very difficult. I doubt if he would let Hector go back to Canada. But he would arrest you, Rory. You must not be seen. You must leave town to-night."

"I have come to see Hector, and I must see him. I promised his mother."

"I could bring him to our house this afternoon, Rory," said Madeleine, "and you could leave the city to-night."

"I will come to your house to-night, then," he said.

"No, Rory, you will come now. Everybody is at the parade. I have my buggy near at hand and will meet you at the next corner. I will take you to Max's quarters, which are now empty, and there you can remain till to-night."

In a few minutes Madeleine appeared driving a smart buggy and a beautiful pair of ponies. After a drive of a mile or more along the avenue they drew up before a splendid stone structure with turrets and lofty gables, after the style of an English manor-house. By a side entrance, Madeleine led the way into the house through a small hall upstairs, and by a long corridor to a suite of rooms which constituted Max's quarters.

"You will wait here," she said to Rory, ushering him into a room. "I will have your lunch sent to you, and Hector will come to you here. I wonder if you want anything or if I can do anything for you. You will find things to drink, I believe, in that cabinet."

"Thank you," said Rory. "You are exceedingly kind to me."

"Kind?" cried the girl, a quick flush coming to her cheek. "I wish I could be kind. Oh, I am so glad to see you, Rory." Into her eyes there came a tender light of which she was quite unconscious, but it made Rory's heart beat quicker.

"I want to hear all about the dear people in Quebec

and Malbaie," she said, "but I dare not stay now. I must go to find Hector. But I will come again, for I must hear about Miss Christine and Josette. Max told me a little, but only a little, poor boy, and I want to hear about—about your dear mother, Rory."

"My mother," said Rory in a low voice, which in spite of what he could do was hoarse and trembling. "She does not forget you, Madeleine. She says—she says she is praying for you—she will always love you."

"Love me?" said the girl softly. "Does she love me?"

"Why not?" said Rory. "Could she help loving you?"

"Oh, but, Rory, I—I was afraid——"

"You need not be afraid, Madeleine, she will always love you. She could not help it."

Madeleine sprang up hurriedly. "I must go and find Hector."

She returned in a very few minutes with a basket of cake and with something to drink. "This is for you just now, Rory; lunch will come in about an hour."

The General had brought home with him to lunch an old friend, Colonel Hooke by name. At lunch they talked about the great parade.

Immediately after lunch Hector arrived and was greeted by General Van Rensselaer with cold courtesy. Madeleine found an early opportunity of taking him to Rory.

"What are you doing here?" asked Hector, both indignation and anxiety in his voice. "You are mad to be here. There is a most violent hatred of spies animating our people, they are hunting them out like dogs. If the mob should ever see you they would tear you to pieces."

"He came to see you," said Madeleine indignantly.

"To see me? What does he want with me?"

"Your mother wants you," said Rory. "She is most unhappy, indeed she is quite ill."

"Ill," said Hector in a hoarse voice. "You say she is ill?"

"Yes," answered Rory. "She is ill in body and more in spirit. Her heart is breaking with grief. The same is true of your father and of Héloïse."

"What do they want me to do?" asked Hector.

"They want you to go home."

"Home!" cried Hector, a little wildly. "Never again could I go home."

"That is nonsense," said Rory. "It is quite possible for you to go home. Your father has seen General Prevost, and there is nothing to prevent your return. The General said he would give you something to do!"

"War, I suppose," said Hector scornfully.

"Yes!" replied Rory. "The only thing for a Canadian who desires to save his country."

"Save his country!" said Hector. "Yes! For England."

"For Canada," said Rory. "You don't know Canada, you only know a section of Canada. Let me tell you what happened to Alain."

"Alain, poor boy! What is he doing?"

Then Rory gave a brief account of Alain's work as a runner with General Brock, and he told it with dramatic force and vigour.

In spite of himself Hector appeared to be moved, but he remained silent.

A servant came to the door.

"Miss Madeleine," he said, "the General desires to see you."

"Uncle Stephan," she said. "What does he want with me? Oh, I hear him coming, Rory."

"Let him come," said Rory.

"Madeleine, Jason is here with two men. He insists — Ah!" he said, seeing Rory. "Who is this gentleman?"

"Uncle, he is a friend of mine from Quebec," said Madeleine hastily.

"General Van Rensselaer, I am Roderick Lovat Fraser

of Malbaie. I have the honour to be a friend of Miss Van Rancken and a family friend of Hector."

"Ah!" said the General, bowing courteously. "And your business?"

"To see Hector, uncle," cried Madeleine.

"And for what purpose?" asked the General.

"I am a messenger from his mother, indeed from his whole family. They want him to return home."

"And very rightly too, but I almost fear that it is too late. He is committed to us. You know, I suppose, that he is affianced to my niece. He has practically repudiated allegiance to the Canadian Government."

"I was not aware of that, sir," said Rory. "But if he did so he acted under a misapprehension."

"Madeleine, am I right? Is this not the young gentleman, the young French Canadian, that spoke at the great meeting a year ago? I remember you, sir," continued the General, turning to Rory, "and the very gallant stand you took on that occasion. A stand which I believe has been justified by events."

"Hector was deceived, he was misled," Rory said.

"But you, sir, you are a soldier in the Canadian army, I believe," went on the General.

"I have that honour," said Rory.

"Your name is not unknown to me. I have heard of you from Jason Appleby, who I believe regards you as a dangerous man. This is serious. Jason is downstairs and insists that there is a Canadian in the house, and doubtless he means to arrest this—— It is exceedingly awkward. I am an American citizen. I cannot harbour spies."

"I have told you, sir," said Rory, "my purpose was to bring Hector back home to his family. I give you my word I have no other purpose here."

"This is exceedingly awkward. My duty is not clear to me, I must confess. If I consider you are a spy, I should at once arrest you."

"Oh, Uncle Stephan, Rory is no spy. I know him, I know him well. He is a dear friend of mine. He would not deceive me."

The General cast a keen glance upon her face. "Ah," he said. "I remember. This is the young man who raced that wonderful mare."

"Yes," cried Madeleine, the red coming into her cheeks. "Yes. He drove Vitesse. He is no spy."

"I have done my work here, General," said Rory, "and, if Hector will come with me, we will with your permission depart. I should be sorry to expose you to criticism."

"You cannot go together," said the General. "It would be too dangerous."

"If Hector will give me his word that he will return to Canada I will take my leave at once. He can easily make his way."

"Oh," cried Madeleine. "Yes, Hector. Tell him you will go."

"You want me to?" asked Hector.

"Yes! Oh, yes!" cried Madeleine. "It is where you should be, you are unhappy here. Canada is your country."

"Then," said Hector in a bitter tone, "to Canada I will go. I have no right here. This is not my country. I will go. And you, Madeleine?"

"I! Does it matter about me now? I—I can only wait here, Hector."

"You will wait here," said Hector. "How long?"

"Oh, I cannot say; certainly till the end of the war. What else can I do?"

"You might possibly come to Canada with me, Madeleine," said Hector, with a note of appeal in his voice.

"Oh, no! I could not do that!" cried the girl.

Hector's keen eyes read her face. His own face grew pale, his lips thin and blue. He turned to General Van Rensselaer. "Then, General, I am ready to leave this country at once. This country has no place for me."

The General bowed. "I cannot deny that I think you are right, sir."

Once more Hector turned to Madeleine. There was a wistful appeal in his eyes.

"Oh, Hector, never mind me. Never think of me. I shall be quite all right here with Uncle."

The eager light faded from Hector's eyes. "Yes!" he muttered. "You will be quite all right. I have long felt that." He paused a few moments and then added in an undertone, as if to himself, "Yes, quite all right, no matter what happened to me."

"I mean, Hector——" broke in Madeleine. "Oh, you know what I mean."

"Yes," said Hector. "I know. My God! I know only too well. General, I am ready. You make no objections to me going?"

"Not at all. You are free to leave when you will. I fancy no one will object."

A knock came to the door:

Madeleine opened it cautiously. Rory stepped quickly to the window, and stood with his back to the room.

"The General is here," said Jason, coming into the room. "Ah, sir, pardon me, I am in somewhat of a hurry. Oh, Hector, you here?"

"Yes," said Madeleine. "Hector is going to Canada. Yes, don't you think that best?"

"He is not doing much good here," said Jason.

"You were keen enough once for me to come," said Hector.

"Ah, yes! Quite true, but things have changed since then."

"You need me no longer, the independence movement is dead."

"Oh, the independence movement, one of the dreams that passed, as all dreams must pass," said Jason lightly.

"Yes, a dream that you never cherished, in spite of your protestations," said Hector.

"Well, I confess I never regarded it other than a pleasant dream," he added with a smile.

"Then you deceived me," said Hector. "You deliberately deceived me, and now you confess yourself to be a liar, a damned liar!"

"I, like yourself, am an American citizen in my country's service. If I consider a man dangerous I would take care of him were he my own brother."

"But Hector is no soldier; he has not enlisted," said the General.

"So I understand," said Jason, a slight sneer curling his lips.

"He is a citizen only, and surely he can return to Canada. Many of the Canadians were allowed to return."

"Yes, some months ago," replied Jason. "But, there, I am not raising any objections to Hector's return. He may return to-day for all I care."

"Hush, Hector," Madeleine cried as she saw the look on his face. "That is settled then! Thank you, Jason. You are very busy, you are about to leave."

"I am waiting," said Jason, "for Mr. Roderick Lovat Fraser, whom I am delighted to see in this room."

Rory faced him and bowed low.

"And your mission here in Albany?" inquired Jason.

"He has come for Hector," cried Madeleine.

"For Hector! You are a Canadian soldier," said Jason.

"A Canadian *voltigeur*," replied Rory with a bow.

"You are of the Intelligence Department, and indeed I believe you have won some distinction in that Department. In other words you are a spy. Pardon me, there is nothing wrong in that, I often act in the same capacity myself. It is interesting if somewhat precarious work."

"He is not a spy here, Jason," said Madeleine. "I have just learned that Mr. Fraser came here for one purpose, and one purpose only. That purpose has nothing to do with war activities."

"Very interesting," said Jason. "You came straight from Quebec to Albany?"

"Is this a cross-examination?" said Rory coolly.

"No," said Jason, "but I damn soon shall make it one. I have long wanted you, I am delighted now to have you. Will you come with me quietly, or shall I ask my men to come upstairs? they are within call."

"Mr. Appleby, you are exceeding your authority. You have no warrant for arresting my guest, Mr. Fraser," said the General haughtily.

"No one knows better than General Van Rensselaer does that no warrant is necessary for anyone suspected of espionage."

"Oh, Jason!" cried Madeleine. "He came only to see Hector. Surely you can believe me; and he is going straight home again."

"I hope so, but I doubt it!" said Jason curtly.

Rory cast a swift glance about the room.

Jason at once drew a pistol.

"Do not attempt to fly. I know you and I know your kind. Attempt any fight or violence and, by the God that made me, I will stop you. Yes! At the cost of my life or yours. Will you come quietly?"

"I will come," said Rory. "Hector, I understand that you give me your word that you will return at once to your country."

"I will go back to Canada. They can't stop me."

"I wouldn't just say that," said Jason, "but personally I shan't try. I have a great regard for you and for your family. You at least are no spy."

"General Van Rensselaer, will you forgive my intrusion here," began Rory.

"Have no fear, sir, nothing that you or anyone here can do can embarrass me. I deeply regret the interpretation put upon your presence by this—this—officer," said the General, shaking his hand.

"Oh, Rory," cried Madeleine, coming to him, and leading him towards a corner of the room. "I am

terribly sorry for what has happened, and it is all my fault." Then in a whisper, "Move quickly." She opened a door in the corner of the room. "Go," she cried, and pushing him through shut the door and stood with her back against it.

"Let me pass," cried Jason, springing at her.

Hector threw himself in his path. "Do not touch her, or, by God, I will kill you!"

For a single instant they stood facing one another.

There was a tap at the door, and again another tap. Hector opened the door. It was Rory standing there.

"I am sorry to trouble you all," he said. "Madeleine, you are a plucky soul, but I could not embarrass you. This gentleman might arrest you all." Rory's ironic smile aroused the devil in Jason.

"At any rate I arrest you. This time you will not escape. Come along with me." He had his hand on Rory's arm.

Rory stepped back a pace. "Keep your arm off me, Jason," he said in a low, deliberate voice vibrant with passion. "I could kill you. I will come with you."

He turned to Madeleine.

"Good-bye. Thank you for your help to-day. Hector will go back to his family and to his country. For that I am glad."

"But, oh," cried Madeleine, "what about you? Oh, it is too terrible! And it is all my fault! I brought you here."

"No, no! Don't blame yourself. I would have come to you anyway, you see, I wanted Hector."

"Yes! Yes, I know," she cried hurriedly, a quick blush coming to her pale face. "It was Hector you wanted. But, oh, Rory, what will they do to you?"

"What matters that? Good-bye again!" He held her hand for a few moments, his eyes devouring her face.

"Good-bye." Madeleine's voice died almost to a whisper. "Good-bye, good-bye."

Rory's lips tightened, but he spoke not a word,

"Your mother," cried Madeleine. "Your mother—I will write to her."

"Good-bye, sir," said Rory, turning to the General. "I am ready, Jason."

Together they went out of the room, leaving the others standing miserably looking at one another.

"What a brute," said Hector.

"No, sir, not a brute," said the General. "He is an officer with a stern sense of duty. We must not blame him too much."

"Oh, uncle," cried Madeleine, "you will save him! You must save him! Jason is so hard. He will certainly have him shot. Oh, uncle—uncle—promise me—promise me—you will not let him——" She flung herself into his arms with passionate sobbing.

"Hush, my dear. Of course we will save him. It is absurd. Never fear. Hark!" They all stood listening. There was a pistol shot, a crashing noise of something falling, a sound of trampling feet, then silence.

Hector dashed out into the corridor and down the stairs, followed by the others. At the foot of the stairs they came upon Jason lying insensible, a smoking pistol at his hand.

In a few moments Jason began to groan. He opened his eyes.

"Where is——" His eyes closed again and he sank into insensibility.

"He will soon be all right," said Madeleine. "Fly—fly, Hector." She kissed him, and pushing him towards the hall door opened it. At the foot of the steps on the gravelled drive were two horsemen, one holding Jason's horse. "You are to call for Mr. Appleby in an hour. Please don't be later than an hour. Mr. Appleby is busily engaged at present." She put a dollar into the soldier's hand.

"Thank you, miss," he said, and mounting his horse he touched his hat and with his comrade started down the avenue.

"Not later than an hour," she cried gaily, and waving her hand entered the house.

The celebration for the St. Regis victory turned out to be slightly premature. In one month to the day a party of soldiers from Cornwall across the river from St. Regis, under the command of Colonel McMillan, assisted by Royal Artillery men, a detachment of the 49th and some Glengarry and Cornwall militia, with thirty Indians, numbering in all about two hundred and fifty, crossed the river one night and captured the American post at French Mills and its garrison with military stores. The garrison was exchanged, a month later, for the voyageurs captured at St. Regis, which ended this incident of the war.

The last event of the 1812 campaign was a feeble and unsuccessful attempt to capture the outpost of La Colle Mill near the border, after which all thought of invading Canada was abandoned for that season and General Dearborn's whole army moved into winter quarters.

CHAPTER XXVI

JASON'S rage at the escape of his prisoner was beyond all power of speech. Within an hour he was back at the Van Rensselaers' mansion demanding to see Hector.

"The General asks for your parole," he announced curtly.

"My parole? That I shall take no part in this war? Why then should I return to my country?"

"It is an order. Are you prepared to give your parole?"

"I'll see you damned first," said Hector, and went to the guard-room at Plattsburg. Three months' experience of the conditions of the Plattsburg guard-room and the failure of his friends in Quebec to secure for him a position in the service of his country broke his spirit, so

that, in bitterness of soul, he finally gave his parole and was released. He was free to return to Quebec, but this he could not face. Albany was hateful to him. Hence like a lost soul he wandered up and down the reaches of Lake Champlain, exploring its nooks and bays in a smart little yacht that he himself had constructed. Often he begged Madeleine to accompany him on these cruises with her old nurse, but after a single voyage Madeleine could not bring herself to repeat it.

Meantime the campaign of 1813 was being waged in Upper Canada with increasing bitterness and generally with disastrous results to the American forces.

But in spite of this, the people of Quebec were in a state of alarm bordering on panic by the summer. Popular rumour regarding the converging armies filled the people of the city with terror. What power had Canada against eighteen thousand men? The chief cause for anxiety among military men, however, was found not in their fear of the enemy, but their uncertainty of their Commander-in-Chief, Governor Sir George Prevost, whose extreme caution and vacillation filled his officers with doubt, at times with dismay. This was Red Rory's report to Simon Fraser upon his return from a tour of the ports established along the Fleuve.

"Everywhere it is the same story. He kills their initiative. General de Salaberry has his Voltigeurs in perfect discipline. His officers are keen to attack at various points. But no! Defensive operations only. It is the same at Kingston. Miss Christine was reading me a letter from the young Seigneur, her brother, Tom."

"Ah, a splendid young man, I hear."

"Yes. He is with the 49th now and is in the greatest spirits. After the affair at Stoney Creek he did a fine bit of work. Took into Burlington Harbour near Hamilton a fleet of bateaux almost from under the guns of Chauncey's fleet."

Simon heard him in silence. Then abruptly asked :

"Did you hear about Hector? He is very weary of his parole."

"Glad to hear it," said Rory.

"He wrote me after the news came of the victory of the 'Shannon' over the 'Chesapeake.' He is chafing terribly. I wish to God he would withdraw his parole. I have work for him—important work. He has been for weeks up and down the Lake. He knows it like a book. I don't believe he can stand this inaction much longer."

Later comparison of dates revealed the fact that it was on that very day that Hector, sick at heart of his inactivity and torn with anxiety over the coming invasion of Canada—preparations for which were going on all about him in Plattsburg and in Burlington across Lake Champlain—determined to withdraw his parole. He sought out Jason, who was at Plattsburg, busy with the flotilla which Captain Macdonough was getting together.

"I have come to take back my parole," he said curtly.

Jason, whose nerves were raw with over-work and with irritation at the constant laxity of discipline all about him, made a sharp reply.

"Do you know that that means the guard-house for you, which is hell?"

"That it will be hell for me, I know," said Hector. "Your guard-house, like everything else about your army, is rotten and unfit for a dog."

"Quite right. Don't do it. I like you. I'd hate to see you there. Stick it out. The war will be over in a few months now."

"Yes, that's what I fear. I can't stick this. I ought never to have been here. I was deceived. You helped, damn you. I take back my parole."

"Remember, I am warning you, Hector. You mean this?"

"I take back my parole."

"Guard. Arrest this man and keep him on your life. You know too much, Hector. We can't let you go."

"You can't keep me unless you shoot me. Your whole damned mob of an army can't keep me."

"Can't, eh? We will see about that. I am busy to-day, but I'll see to your safe-keeping, my boy. Good-bye," said Jason with a grim laugh. The laugh he repeated in a letter to Héloïse. He had never failed to send a weekly letter. "We have him safe now," he wrote. "I will do my best to make him comfortable. Poor chap! He is a fine fellow. We will keep him safe for you."

The preparations for Hampton's march were being pushed on with great diligence. Munitions, stores, guns, transport were being massed in great quantities for the great attack.

Governor-General Prevost was deeply perplexed as to the objective of the expedition. Kingston or Montreal. In early July he sent for Rory.

"I want you to go down the Richelieu. Get as near Plattsburg and Burlington as you can. But be careful. They are becoming very sharp with spies."

"I know that," laughed Rory.

"Find out their objective. Take any man you want. I give you *carte blanche*."

"There is one man who would be invaluable. I want Hector Fraser."

"What? That traitor?"

Rory rose to his feet. "Your Excellency, he is no traitor. He is only a misguided patriot. He knows that whole district as I know Quebec, and better. I want him."

"Take him, in God's name," said the Governor, whose nerves were on the raw.

Rory hastened to Simon with the news. "Now we shall give Mr. Jason something to think of."

"But Hector is in prison and closely guarded."

"Bah! Prison! Guarded? I could drive a yoke of oxen through their camp from one end to the other without a halt. We'll get Hector, and that right soon."

Within six days Rory was back in Simon's store.

"Well, we've got him," he announced.

"Who?" said Simon, springing from his chair.

"Hector," said Rory. "He is in my camp on the Richelieu."

"Man, man, how did you manage that?" said Simon, gripping his arm with both hands.

"It was easy. A cosy fire on a rainy night with a bottle of whisky is a great attraction to a guard on sentry-go. We sent the whisky. It did its work. Hector walked out with the guard's overcoat and musket."

A weird sound, half shriek, half moan, pierced the night. A wild figure burst in upon them.

"I heerd ye! Hoo-r-r-oo! Didna I tell ye? He is the lad! He is the best o' the lot o' ye! Ye never gied him a chance. Ye were aye against him. The puir lad. But noo he's comin' tae his ain. Ha! I diddelt ye fine!"

"What is the meaning of this unseemly behaviour, Airdrie? Have you lost your mind?" asked Simon in a stern voice.

Airdrie turned in savage glee upon Rory.

"And hoo did ye like the young ledly's letters? Ha ha! Man, I diddelt ye! Ha ha ha!"

It was a fiend's laugh. The man was as one possessed. His grey hairs were on end, his gnarled face working violently, his upraised hands trembling, his eyes glaring into Rory's with diabolic glee.

"Letters?" said Rory, approaching the man.

"Ay! Hoo did ye enjoy them? Ha ha! Oho! An' ye cast her aff, ye gowk! Who are ye tae come in betwixt the young maister and his love?"

With one spring Rory had him by the throat.

"Tell me what you mean, you devil! What letters? Speak or I'll choke the life out of you! What letters? Speak! Damn you! Speak! Speak!"

"Stop, Rory," said Simon. "You are killing the man. Let him tell us what he means."

"What letters?" gasped Airdrie, his hands at his throat. "What letters but the young leddy's? She gied them tae the young maister an' like a fule he would have sent them on tae ye. But I did better than that. Ha ha ha!"

"Hold on, Rory," said Simon, keeping Rory back. "Do you know where those letters are, Airdrie?"

"Ay. I ken fine. Ye can get them in my desk. An' guid luck tae ye."

"Did Hector know about this?" asked Simon.

"Not he! I kent fine he wadna agree to that. Na, na!"

"Wait, Rory!" Simon went to Airdrie's desk, returned with a bundle of letters and handed them to Rory.

Rory took them, looked at the writing on the outside, turned them over in his hands, put them carefully in his inside coat pocket. He had forgotten the creature before him.

"You were to deliver those letters to Rory," said Simon.

"Ay, I was. But I didna! Not me!"

"You will get your wages to-morrow. You will leave the store to-day. All these years I trusted you, Airdrie."

"Did I ever fail ye? What is this man beside yer ain flesh an' blood? Ye never was fair tae the young maister. Never! But I saved his lassie for him! Ha ha!"

"Let him stay, Simon," said Rory. "He has been loyal to you and yours."

"Go!" said Simon, pointing to the door.

"Ay, I'll go. My work here is done, an' weel done!"

Chuckling, the little Scot walked to the door, his head high in the air. At the door he turned and with finger pointed at Rory he cried:

"Ay! I diddelt ye, ye habitant!"

"How terrible for you!" said Simon, as the door closed behind the man. "I grieve for you, Rory!"

"Grieve for me? Oh, no. It is wonderful?" said Rory, his face alight, his eyes glowing.

Simon gazed at him amazed.

"You see, she was true to me all the time. I should have known she would be. Ah, she must have suffered! And now I am going to find out if she loves me still. For, if she loves me, neither Hector nor any other man in God's world will keep her from me."

"When?"

"To-day! Now!"

"But your plans, Rory? Your duty?"

"My duty?" He gazed about him in dumb wonder. "Ah, yes, my duty," he groaned. "Yes, my duty. I must go to the Governor. They are all waiting down there for the word."

An hour was sufficient to lay before the Governor the plans matured by the officers on the Richelieu for a great *coup*.

The Governor was amazed and delighted.

"Most complete. Never saw anything so perfectly laid out. Whose work is this? Yours, I suppose?"

"No. The whole scheme, with details, is the work of Hector Fraser."

"Hector Fraser! Ha! Tell him, sir, I shall be glad to see him after this is carried through. How long will this take?"

"Within two weeks, your Excellency, if all goes well."

On the tenth day when the Governor and his council of war were in session an orderly came in with a note for His Excellency.

"Bring him in! At once! Bring him in!" said the Governor, rising from his chair.

Every man followed his example. The orderly opened the door and Alain McNab stumbled in, and clutching a chair attempted to stand at attention.

"Give the boy a drink. He is fainting," cried the Governor.

Alain straightened himself to his full height.

"I have the honour to report, your Excellency, that the raid planned on Plattsburg and Burlington was carried out with complete success. In both cases, fort, barracks, stores, munitions were completely destroyed."

"What date was that?" inquired the Secretary.

"The date?" said Alain, his hand going to his head.

"I—can't—remember——"

"Dammit, who cares what date?" cried Macdonell.

"Drink this, my boy."

The despatch from Colonel Murray of the 100th battalion gave with soldier-like brevity the details of the raid. Colonel Murray with nine hundred soldiers, Captain Pring and Captain Everard of the navy had raided both Plattsburg and Burlington and had completely destroyed barracks with all stores and military equipment prepared for Hampton's invasion.

"Gentlemen, this will give us a breathing spell. It is right that you should know that the details of the plan were prepared by Mr. Hector Fraser."

"Great heavens!" exclaimed General de Salaberry.

"Hector Fraser? But I understood that—that——"

"General, all that, you understand, is now a thing of the past. Mr. Hector Fraser carries my complete confidence."

Alain, exhausted with his journey and overwrought by his emotions, burst forth:

"He is a good man, and as good a Canadian as any man here!"

All eyes were turned upon the boy. His face was white, his lips quivering, his eyes full of tears.

"Gad! I am delighted to hear you say so, boy," said Macdonell, putting his hand on Alain's shoulder. "Your testimony does credit to you both."

As a result of the raid Hampton's invasion was postponed for nearly two months.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE plan of campaign for the conquest of Lower Canada was thoroughly sound. Two great armies, one at Sacketts Harbour under General Wilkinson was to proceed down the St. Lawrence, the other under Hampton to march north-west, both armies to meet at a point opposite Montreal and there uniting, to cross the Fleuve, capture Montreal and then proceed to Quebec.

The chief result of the raid on Burlington and Plattsburg was the postponement of Hampton's invasion for some six weeks, so that, after spending the greater part of the summer in preparation, it was about the middle of September before he finally set forth. When half-way to his destination he was halted by a despatch from Wilkinson to the effect that, seeing that the flotilla was not ready to sail, it would be necessary to delay the advance for another month. This delay was deeply deplored, indeed resented, by Hampton, who consistently refused to recognize Wilkinson as his superior officer. Finally, however, on the 25th of November, with a force of six thousand men, infantry and artillery, Hampton arrived at the Chateauguay river. Along the north bank led the road which would bring him to his rendezvous with Wilkinson.

Immediately opposing him was De Salaberry with sixteen hundred men, and some miles nearer Montreal De Wattville with the main body of reserves and the artillery. Next day—the 26th of November—was fought the battle of Chateauguay. On the 27th, Hampton was in full retreat to the boundary line. His army with guns, munitions and stores was practically intact except for the loss of less than sixty men. This ending of the campaign for the conquest of Lower Canada, as far as the right wing of the army of the north was concerned, naturally filled the American people with amazement

and humiliation and the Canadians with amazement and rejoicing.

Immediately runners were sent with the news west and east for the purpose of heartening the little groups of soldiers holding their posts along the long line of the Fleuve. For Malbaie Rory was chosen, and with him, in recognition of their fine services in the raid on the Richelieu, Alain and Polydore Hammel.

It was a memorable day for Malbaie. In front of the church the whole populace was assembled, and there Rory, from the platform before the door, told his tale. Beside him stood, on the one hand the old Seigneur of Mount Murray, Colonel Malcolm Fraser, and on the other M. Courtois, the Curé of the parish.

In words simple as if to children, Rory gave in detail the incidents of the flight. First the preparation for the invasion. Two armies, one at Sacketts Harbour under General Wilkinson, opposite Kingston, the other at Burlington and Plattsburg on Lake Champlain under General Hampton, were making ready. How many men? Eighteen thousand, fifteen thousand, no one knew. The point of attack? Kingston or Montreal, no one knew. "A great many things we didn't know, but we knew more than they thought," which little pleasantry released uproarious laughter from his hearers. They were easily moved to-day, both to laughter and to tears.

"The armies for the defence were slight enough, some detachments of regulars, oh, so few. We have only forty-five hundred regulars in all Canada—Upper and Lower. But our militia is not to be despised. For instance, Red George Macdonell's Glengarry Fencibles and our own General de Salaberry's Voltigeurs are second only to the gallant regiments of the line."

Cheers for the Voltigeurs and for Red George and his men followed.

"Two big armies coming to eat us up, one from the west and one from the south, and they do not have the courtesy to tell us which door they wish to enter by.

Well, our Governor said, 'It is Kingston,' and so he took what he could of men and sent word to Red George and hurries to Kingston. When the march of Hampton to Chateauguay began he hurried his men on board ship and calls to Macdonell, 'Follow me. How soon can you start?' 'Whenever the men have their dinner,' said Red George. One day in getting bateaux, another day held up at the Long Sault by a storm, but on the fourth day that boy was at Chateauguay, though he had to march forty miles through the bush in a black night to do it."

Loud cheers for Red George.

"And when the Governor-General arrived he was greeted by Colonel Macdonell with the report, 'All correct and all present. Not a man missing!'"

"The Governor, he will not like that too well!" cried a voice.

"He was no doubt delighted," replied Rory. "My story goes on. Here on the Chateauguay, General Hampton with six thousand and some say twelve cannon, some thirty—we do not know. He is anxious to march down the north bank to the Fleuve. M. de Salaberry says, 'Pardon me, not so fast, please. Here are six nice little streams flowing into the Chateauguay. They have water in them and on the east side of each is an abattis of trees, which my Voltigeurs have chopped for you, and these you will need to cross.' But he does not say to M. Hampton, 'Behind me at the sixth little stream at a ford which your scouts have told you is Morrison's ford—oh, they know all about these streams, these scouts—you will find Red George. He will be glad to welcome you.' 'Aha! Much obliged, M. de Salaberry. Not just yet, mon vieux. I have something better.'"

"So he sent his best officer, Colonel Purdy, by night through the bush on the south bank, not to disturb M. de Salaberry, to the sixth ford. But Purdy had no voyageurs with him. He did not know the Chateauguay bush, the swamps and bogs. Soon they were lost. The

rain came down, they sat down and waited for the morning. But Red George, he was up early. 'Aha !' he says, 'some visitors ! We must welcome these gentlemen.' That is the end of M. Purdy and his men.

"M. Hampton heard the noise of guns. 'Now is my time,' he said. 'Quick march.' But M. de Salaberry, he said, 'Halt !' His Voltigeurs said, 'Halt.' 'Oh, very well,' said M. Hampton, 'if you feel that way, I will go home.' And we have not seen M. Hampton since. That is all."

"Ah, they are cowards, these Bostonnais," cried a voice.

"No, no, my friend," said Rory. "I have seen these Americans. They are no cowards. They just lacked two things. First, leaders ; and second, discipline. So, you men of Malbaie, be sure to learn your drill. Your leaders are ready and fit to lead you to victory."

And then the men of Malbaie went mad. The women too, and the children. And Miss Christine, who had been sitting in her carriage listening with eyes shining, now with joy and again with tears, carried Rory and Alain to the manor-house for dinner. Under the trees a great feast had been spread by the Seigneur Fraser and Madame Nairne, where for two hours they ate and drank till they could no more.

On November the 2nd, after long and vexatious delays, General Wilkinson made his first move from Sacketts Harbour. By the 5th, his great flotilla emerged from its last rendezvous at French Creek. In three hundred and fifty bateaux, with banners flying and bands playing, the great army, some eight thousand in number, horse, foot, artillery, was afloat and bound for Montreal.

Chauncey guarded the rear. But through the side channels of the river a little fleet of gunboats eluded Chauncey and followed continuously in the wake of the great flotilla. The little fleet sailed under an officer of the navy, Lieutenant Mulcaster, with Colonel Morrison of the 89th, an experienced and daring officer, in com-

mand of detachments from the 49th, in which Captain Thomas Nairne commanded a company, and the 89th.

General Wilkinson proceeded with great caution. The north bank was haunted by small detachments of the enemy who at every opportunity opened fire upon the flotilla. Wilkinson was fortunate in having with him two officers who had already in this war given proof of courage and ability, General Brown and General Boyd. The molestation from the hidden enemy had become so annoying that, at Williamsburg, General Wilkinson ordered General Brown with two thousand men to land and clear the bank as far as Cornwall, twenty miles down stream, and General Boyd with two thousand more to accompany by land the movements of the flotilla. With promptness and despatch, General Brown proceeded to carry out his orders and, though he had to beat off every mile of the way Captain Dennis of Queenston fame, he sent word back on the 11th of November to General Wilkinson, still at Williamsburg, that the road to Cornwall was clear. Wilkinson prepared to set sail once more with Boyd attending him on shore. At the head of the Long Sault, Wilkinson, dreading a night trip down the rapids, decided to tie up for the night at Cook's Point. Close behind him Mulcaster, in his gunboats, managed now and then to drop annoying shells upon the flotilla. Colonel Morrison, too, had landed his little army and was giving trouble. That little army, now grown to eight hundred men with three field-pieces, was a weird and motley combination of fighting men. But the backbone was made up of two famous regiments, the 49th and the 89th, and, second only to these, Canadian regulars, French and English, with Canadian militia who in the coming fight proved themselves worthy of a place with these tried soldiers.

To make the combination thoroughly representative there was also a party of Indians.

The little British army was fortunate in its officers, Colonel Morrison, a man of experience in the Continental

wars, and Lieutenant-Colonel Harvey and Lieutenant-Colonel Plenderleath, both trained under Brock, had already won fame in this war.

The following morning, as he was about to embark, General Wilkinson descried a body of redcoats too considerable to be ignored and too near to be comfortable. He ordered General Boyd to drive them off. With some eighteen hundred men, infantry, artillery and cavalry, Boyd proceeded upon this business and the battle of Chrystler's Farm was on, with General Wilkinson observing from a covered boat close by.

The engagement lasted about two hours and a half and was fought with persistence and courage on both sides. But the discipline and steadiness that are gained only upon the field of battle told at last. Boyd was driven down the field till he came within shelter of the guns of the flotilla. The embarkation was hurriedly effected and Boyd and his dragoons departed down the river towards Cornwall. The loss upon the American side in killed and wounded was nearly four hundred, with one hundred taken prisoners. The British loss was twenty-two killed, one hundred and forty-seven wounded and twelve missing.

In great haste General Wilkinson fled down the rapids, but all thought of attack upon Montreal had vanished from his mind. Landing at Barnhart Island, he found a messenger from General Hampton announcing his retreat. Glad of a scapegoat for his own cowardice and inefficiency, General Wilkinson called a Council of War, laid before it Hampton's letter, expressed his indignation at his colleague's failure and his conviction that to prosecute the enterprise would now be most unwise ; although he was still in command of an army of over six thousand effective troops with a flotilla capable of landing them on the island of Montreal.

The decision of the Council that the advance upon Montreal should be abandoned was, in truth, a vote of want of confidence in their Commander-in-Chief.

The battles of Chrystler's Farm and Chateauguay ended the war as far as Lower Canada was concerned. They are not to be ranked among the great battles of the world, but they have epochal significance in that they had a determinative influence upon the destiny of the North American continent. A different issue in these battles might well have changed the currents of history.

CHAPTER XXVIII

ON his return to Quebec, Rory was ordered to Upper Canada. It was evident that the 1814 campaign would be concentrated upon the Niagara frontier where General Brown, who had superseded General Wilkinson as Commander-in-Chief, and General Winfield Scott were hammering into shape an army worthy of the name. Every man was needed, especially in the Intelligence Department.

But in the early part of the year Rory was called again to Quebec to headquarters.

"There is a new movement on foot at Plattsburg. Just what I cannot discover. But you will find out," said the Governor.

At Plattsburg Rory learned that General Wilkinson and his entourage had gone home to Albany for a great War Council. He decided that it was necessary to his mission to go to that city. The road to Albany was congested with military stores and equipment of every kind.

"Something doing evidently," said Rory, who found it easy to make his way through the crowded traffic without detection. In Albany there was the same massing of material, and troops *en route* to Plattsburg. He had not been an hour in the camp before he learned that a new expedition to Montreal was being planned for the early spring before the break-up of the roads.

The War Council would decide the question, who would be Commander-in-Chief. Wilkinson, it appeared, was vociferous in his claim for the position. His political backers at Washington were intensely active on his behalf. The army, especially that section which had had experience of him as Commander, was bitterly hostile.

A single day was enough for Rory's purpose. He had learned all he needed to know. Now he must see Madeleine. The Van Rensselaers' house was filled to overflowing with the suites and servants of the great officials gathered for the Council of War. Madeleine, also, was deeply engaged. A letter to her was too precarious.

At the inn where he had put up he overheard a truck man bewailing his unhappy lot in that he was forced to convey a load of heavy baggage to the Van Rensselaer mansion, late as it was.

"They wouldn't wait till morning, not them. And this blizzard fit to blow the back teeth out your head."

"Say, I'll give you a hand for a couple o' drinks," said Rory, who was haunting the bar with a thirsty look in his eye.

The truck man eagerly struck a bargain, and, by the time they had arrived at their destination, the two had become bosom friends.

"Guess we'll go round to the side door," said the driver.

Rory agreed. He knew that side door.

"You will take that trunk upstairs," ordered the footman.

"Let me take that. One man can handle a trunk easier than two," said Rory, heaving the trunk up on his shoulder.

"Say, he's a whale," said the driver in high admiration.

"Which way?" said Rory.

"Follow me!" ordered the footman, leading the way upstairs and along a corridor which Rory remembered led to Max's rooms.

"Wait here."

He disappeared and almost immediately returned with Madeleine following him.

"Do you wish this trunk in the room, miss, or in the store-room at the back?"

"Oh, in the store-room," she said. "Go down for the others. I will direct the man."

Rory followed her along the dimly-lighted corridor.

"Set it down here. You must be tired carrying that heavy trunk."

He set the trunk down, took off his cap, turned his face towards her and with hand uplifted said :

"Hush! Tell me quick where I can meet you." His words came with a rush. "I must see you. I have a message from Miss Christine—and for myself I must see you."

As he spoke she regained her self-control.

"I will arrange it," she said as the footman reappeared, directing the driver bearing another trunk.

When they had disposed of all the baggage, Madeleine said to the driver :

"Cannot one of you stay here and help us? We are rather short-handed."

"Not me, miss. I gotta be early at the sheds, but I guess this feller kin. And he's a mighty good man too."

Reluctantly Rory agreed to remain.

"Very well. James, see that the driver has some supper and some refreshment. It is a bitter night. Now then, if you will come with me I will show you what I want you to do."

She led the way through a door at the end of the corridor and, after passing through a bewildering series of rooms, came to a large empty room furnished with a large table and chairs and with a huge fire burning brightly in the grate.

"Oh, I forgot," she cried. "The Council is to meet here almost immediately. Come in here." Through a side door she passed into a smaller room and locked the door behind her.

"What is it, Rory?" she said, coming to him with hand outstretched.

He took her hand, and holding it in both his stood gazing into her eyes, for a time unable to find words. Then he slowly kneeled before her and, kissing her hand, said brokenly :

"Oh, Madeleine! I have got your letters."

"My letters? What can you mean?"

He took the packet from his pocket and handed them to her.

"I don't understand!" she gasped. "Sit here, Rory." She placed a chair for him and set one for herself beside him.

"Now tell me."

And he told the tale of Airdrie's treachery.

"And I thought—I couldn't understand. I thought you thought that it was all a mistake—that you didn't—love me——"

"Oh, Rory," she exclaimed. "Oh, you poor boy! You thought—oh, how cruel. What you must have suffered! Oh, I know, I know what it is." Her hands were hard pressed on her heart. "Oh, what cruel pain it was!"

The tender pity in her voice broke down Rory's self-control. The long, long months of agony came flooding over his soul. He put his face in his hands while his body shook with silent sobs. Like a mother comforting a child, she put her arms about him. Then with her own handkerchief she wiped away his tears.

"Oh, you poor darling! You poor boy! But now you know!" she cried joyfully. "Now you know. My letters would tell you."

He shook his head.

"I didn't read them," he said.

She turned the letters over. "You mean! You haven't opened them!"

"No. I couldn't tell whether you would like me to read them—now—since things have changed!"

Her blue eyes were wide with wonder.

"And you never read them!"

"How could I? God knows it was like a man dying of thirst with a pitcher of water in his hand."

"Oh, Rory, that is you. Of course you would not. But now you know." Her voice was like the song of a bird. "You know I never changed. How wonderful for you to know that. Just like me to know you hadn't changed. But you were a silly boy, Rory, to ever think I could change. Oh, silly and wicked and hard to me!"

"Yes. Silly, wicked and hard!"

"Hush, no more! You were not!"

He held out his arms to her.

She shrank back. "No, Rory. Not now. There is Hector. I have given my word to Hector. And besides, Hector needs me."

"But you love me, Madeleine," said Rory.

"Oh, yes! Oh, yes!" she cried wildly. "Don't make it hard for me. I must be true. It is you, Rory, and only you and always you! Oh, I am so glad! So happy! And you love only me!"

"Never any other, Madeleine. Don't think me bold."

"Bold?" She laughed wildly. "Oh, if you had only been bold! Oh, I wanted you to carry me off with you that day you were here. Oh, I would have gone anywhere, anywhere." She stood gazing at him, her heart in her eyes.

Suddenly a shadow fell over her face. "Now, Rory, what else?"

"There is great grief in Miss Christine's home. The young Seigneur was killed at Chrystler's Farm while gallantly repelling at a critical moment a desperate charge. There were few tears as I told them—they are not the kind that weep—but I shall ever carry in my heart their stricken faces."

With tears flowing she listened to the tale. As it was finished there were voices in the next room.

"The Council!" whispered Madeleine. "There is no other door. We must wait."

"Good," whispered Rory, taking her hand in his.

"Oh, Rory," she protested, trying to pull away her hand. "Oh, well," she added, "it is very little after all."

"Little!" murmured Rory, pressing his lips upon her hand. "It is like a drop of water in hell."

"Poor boy," she said, patting his cheek.

Hand in hand they sat conversing in whispers, the sound of voices coming dully through the closed door.

Finally, the General's voice rose above the others. "Supper will be ready in the dining-room, gentlemen," he announced. "My niece will be waiting for you."

"Good-bye, Rory. No, no! We must not, darling. But I am so happy. Now I will let you out. Good night."

"Good night, Madeleine. But, remember, I love you and you love me. Nothing else matters. And at all costs we belong to each other. Remember that."

"I won't think of that now, Rory. I won't think of anything but that you love me!"

"You won't kiss me once, Madeleine? Just once? It has been hell with me for a long, long time."

"Oh, Rory. I want to so! Help me to say no."

"Help you to say no? Not I. You want to?"

"Oh, Rory!"

He drew her close to his breast. "You belong to me," he whispered. "No man has a right to kiss you but me." He pressed his lips upon hers.

Her arms went round his neck. Wildly she clung to him, kissing him again and again.

"I couldn't help it, Rory. You made me," she whispered.

"Did I?" said Rory with a laugh as he released her.

"I'll take the blame, and be glad to."

She closed the door upon him and stood with eyes shining, her face radiant, her hands upon her heart.

"It was my fault, poor boy. He couldn't help it," she whispered to herself and flew upstairs to her room.

A month later events on the border justified the vote of General Van Rensselaer. On March 30th, General Wilkinson, to redeem his name from everlasting obloquy, with four thousand men set out on his march to Montreal. Two miles from the border he attacked the port of La Colle, defended by Major Handcock with five hundred men. It was the old story. His advance guard lost their way in the dark and were driven back in confusion. Next morning he spent some hours marching and counter-marching his army. Finally he decided that the time was not opportune for an advance. He marched his men back to camp, and thus ended the last attempt to conquer Quebec.

CHAPTER XXIX

IT was an evening of jubilation at the Van Rensselaer mansion. The pent-up enthusiasm of months was being released. The General had invited to dinner his friend Colonel Hooke, with a few kindred spirits, among them Jason Appleby, for whose flaming patriotism the General had great admiration. It was frankly a gathering whose purpose was to celebrate the praises of the new type of American army which had been produced by such men as General Winfield Scott and General Brown.

When the guests had gone, Madeleine came into her uncle's study.

"I want to speak to you, uncle," she said.

"My dear child, what is wrong? You have not been yourself for months. Sit here and tell your uncle."

"I will sit here, uncle." Her face was deathly pale, her eyes like coals of fire.

"Uncle, this war is killing me. You know I am engaged to Hector, but I love Rory."

"The young man—the racing fellow."

"He is now Major Fraser on Governor Prevost's staff and held in high esteem in his own country. My engagement was a terrible mistake. I was a foolish and wicked girl." She narrated the story of Airdrie's treachery.

"I ought to have known Rory would never change. But I was angry and—and—Hector was very kind. He is a splendid man, uncle. I am fond of him, but I love Rory and Rory loves me. I want to break my engagement. So I must see Hector, and then I want to see Rory. Oh, uncle," her words came with a quick rush, "there is going to be desperate fighting. Jason said so, and he knows. Rory might be killed. I want him to know. I want to tell him—oh, I want him—— If anything should happen before—— Oh, uncle, I want him to know, I am his and only his."

"What can we do, Madeleine darling? You know I will do anything I can."

"I want to go to Hector first. He is at La Colle."

"La Colle! A hundred miles away!"

"And then see Rory. He is at Chambly. I can take Jacob and nurse. I can get a pass from Jason. I know he will give it. He has changed his mind about Hector—and—— You will not deny me this?"

"But, my darling! The thing is impossible."

"No, uncle. It is quite possible. The road to Plattsburg is well travelled, troops going every day. At Plattsburg Jason will help me—and it will be quite simple."

"Simple?"

"Yes, very simple. I am going, uncle. You will not say no. I must go! Oh, I must go!" The quiet determination in her voice made her uncle feel that the only question for him to decide was that of ways and means.

Three days later she was at La Colle inquiring for Hector. He was easy to find. Every man at the port knew Hector Fraser, the real hero of the great raid of last year.

Her interview with Hector was brief and pregnant with soul agony for both of them.

"I expected this, Madeleine. You never loved me. I thought I could win you. I wanted you desperately, you see. Of course you know I had nothing to do with Airdrie's trick, though somehow I suspected something had happened—and I was afraid to inquire—you see I loved you so."

"Oh, I know, Hector!" she cried, the tears running down her white face. "It was my fault. I was foolish and proud. Oh, I see it now. Poor Rory. He is proud too. But I did wrong—I did not mean to deceive you. You believe me, Hector?"

"Hush, hush, my dear. Now you want to see Rory. I will send you to him. He is a great man. He is worthy of you."

"Oh, Hector."

"Don't cry! Don't make me break down! You must go, dear. I will send Alain with you."

"Oh, Hector!" cried the girl, wildly weeping. "Put your arms round me! Oh, I need you and I love you too. But——"

"Don't, Madeleine!" said Hector in a low, quiet voice. "I can only stand so much. Good-bye—oh, darling, good-bye."

He held her close for a moment.

"Good-bye, Hector!" She put her arms round his neck and kissed him on the lips. "Good-bye," she sobbed. "I don't deserve your goodness to me! Good-bye."

Within fifteen minutes Madeleine and her old nurse were in a canoe, with Alain at the stern and Aristide Grenier at the bow.

"You have the two best canoe-men on the river, Madeleine. So you are quite safe. Alain, whatever Miss Madeleine wants, you will do. Wherever she wants to go you will take her. I trust her to you."

"With my life," said Alain, his paddle at the salute.

At the Chambly landing a soldier met them demanding passes.

"Alain, I know you of course. But the ladies."

"They are friends of Hector Fraser's."

"That is good enough. But they must have passes to the camp. The Queen of Sheba couldn't get in here without a pass."

"We have passports from Plattsburg but not to your camp. We want to see Major Fraser," said Madeleine, her heart beating quick.

"Major Fraser? Lady, you have good friends, but we must have a pass."

"Dammit, sergeant, this lady, I know she is——"

"Tut, tut, Alain. You know the rules. Wait." He called a guard. "Alain, you go with this man to Major Fraser. Lady, will you come into the guard-room? It would be more comfortable, I mean"—with a blush, for the blue eyes were making havoc of his nerves—"more private like."

"Oh, thank you," said Madeleine.

The young guard helped her from the canoe and conducted her to the guard-room. The nurse remained in the canoe.

"Not a very comfortable chair, I'm afraid, but it will perhaps do for a time. Major Fraser will not be long, I think."

She thanked him. Alone for the first time, she asked herself the question: "What am I to say to him?" Panic seized her. Why had she come? What would he think of her? What would his friends think of her? How terribly unmaidenly it was! She set herself to recall the reasons which in her home seemed so overpowering. What were they? One only she could remember. Rory might be killed and he would never know that she was free to be loved by him. Free to let him—her face grew hot. She had come all this way that Rory might take her in his arms and kiss her. Oh, how bold! How awful! She heard quick footsteps.

coming. She sprang to her feet, her heart in her throat choking her.

"Yes, sir," she heard the guard say. "She is in here, sir." The door opened and Rory was in the room.

"Madeleine!" he cried, and all her panic fled. Everything was right. "Madeleine. You are here, actually here." Thank God he had not asked her why she had come.

"Yes, I am here, Rory," her blue eyes timidly raised to his. "Do you want me?"

"Want you? My God!" He opened his arms to her.

"Rory, I am free to come. I have seen Hector," she whispered, the blue eyes still making their timid appeal.

How long after neither of them knew, a gentle knock brought them back to time and place.

"The lady, sir. She wants to know what she is to do. I can easily accommodate her, sir."

"Thanks, corporal. The young lady will see her in a few minutes," said Rory.

"Certainly, sir," said the understanding corporal. "There is no hurry. She will be quite comfortable, sir."

"What shall I do, Rory?" said Madeleine, calmly shifting the burden of responsibility on his shoulders. "Of course I can go right back to La Colle. My carriage is waiting for me there?"

"Good Lord! Go back? You must, yes, you must have tea. Let me think. Yes, certainly. My friend, Mrs. Fenwick, Mrs. Colonel Fenwick, will give us tea. She is a dear! You will love her. And to-morrow—" A light flamed up in his eyes. He laughed a gay laugh. "To-morrow we—we will see. Oh, Madeleine, you are a wonderful girl! Come along."

"But"—she smoothed her frock—"how do I look?" He satisfied her as to her appearance, and together they went to the nurse. "Anna, we are going to tea," Madeleine calmly announced, "with Mr. Fraser. Rory, this is my dear old nurse, my mother's before me."

Rory bowed to her as if she were a Princess. "Your young lady will be the better of a cup of tea," he said.

"She will that, sir," said the nurse, quite as if the smooth currents of ordinary life were bearing her along.

"Alain!" called Rory. "Come along!"

"I'll stay with Aristide," said Alain.

"I'll look after them, sir," said the corporal. "They will be quite all right."

"Very good. Come along, Madeleine. Everything is all right. Oh, is this really so? And you? Or is it all a wonderful dream? Pinch me, Madeleine."

She caught his arm. "Oh, Rory," she whispered. "I was afraid in there I made a mistake, but——"

"But now you know that everything in the world is just as it ought to be. You are here and I am here, and that's enough."

CHAPTER XXX

MADELEINE was home again. How different everything! The ring on her finger! Home because her husband was in dire peril. Yet she was happy.

That wonderful day at the camp when they robed her and wreathed her hair in wild-flowers, cornflowers and yellow daisies, and with a guard of honour and the Governor's own band she had walked down the aisle under the trees upon Simon Fraser's arm—the Governor had offered, but when she knew that Simon Fraser was in the camp, no other would she have to give her away—and then Rory came in his guard uniform and stood beside her—not a bit ugly. It was Simon that had arranged the trip by canoe down the Richelieu and on the "Firefly" down the Fleuve past the Great Rock and on to Malbaie.

First they had gone to Miss Christine, who kissed them and scolded them and wept over them. And then she

sent them to the little lady in the cosy, cheery, shiny habitant log house. She remembered the queer little thrill in her heart as she cried, "Mother, I have come home to you," and another thrill at the reply, "I knew you would come." How did she know? It must have been Rory. She knew his love, his great love would bring her.

There they remained for a night, with the Malbaie river singing them love-songs all night long; and would have gone next day, but the people of Malbaie would not have it. They went to their Curé and he to the old Seigneur Fraser. And nothing would do but a grand feast under the big oaks and pines where there was such eating and drinking as she had never seen. And then the old Seigneur in his old uniform, with Madame Nairne on his right and the new Madame Fraser on his left, and Rory and Miss Christine and the Curé in their proper places, rose and in right royal and loyal phrase gave them "The Bride." And then Rory stood up and thanked the old Seigneur, who had been father to him all his days, and thanked them all for honouring his wife as they had. And then very simply and without suggestion of regrets or tears he told them in how gallant a manner, and in the moment of the victory he had helped to win, the young Seigneur had given his life for his country. "And that is what we all must be willing to do whether by living and working here to old age as had the old Seigneur, or by dying as the young Seigneur had died." And then for the love they all bore the young Seigneur and his family, he asked them to drink in silence to the memory of their dearly-loved friend, Seigneur Tom Nairne. But the great feast ended on a note of triumph. The war was drawing to a close. Canadians of all races and creeds had done their part with honour. There was still fighting to be done, but the morning of victory was coming up out of the night of sorrow and loss.

Then as the night shadows began to fall they all accom-

panied them to the "Firefly" with much shouting and firing of muskets and even of the old cannon in front of the manor-house.

Under a harvest moon with the tide running full, the "Firefly" spread her white wings and moved off, silent and lovely as a beautiful dream fading behind the dark pines of the Pointe au Pic, from whose peak there burst in final farewell a pyramid of fire.

Whatever of sorrow the future might have, nothing could ever take from her the ineffable joy of that week with its mystery of perfect love.

And even her uncle, who had been deeply grieved that the ceremony had not taken place in the fitting environment of his ancestral stately mansion, when he heard from the old nurse how beautiful she had appeared and when he saw the quiet peace and joy in her lovely face, came to know that the best had been done and was content.

The days that followed were filled with the alarms of war. For Governor Prevost with eleven thousand men was already almost within cannon shot of the doomed camp of Plattsburg. And Commander Downie was night and day driving his carpenters to complete the outfitting of his flag-ship the "Confiance" in which he was to lead his flotilla into the harbour.

"Let him come," Jason said. "Macdonough is ready for him."

For once Prevost was urging haste. The army and navy were to make a joint attack. The hour was set, and ready or not Downie must be at his post on the morning of the eleventh of September. With this message he had despatched Rory to the young naval officer, with threats and innuendoes.

Early that morning Rory had appeared at his camp, flung himself off his half-dead horse and with scant ceremony into the council of officers.

"Sir," he cried, in amazement to find them sitting quietly in council, "the hour of tryst is long past. You

have only an hour to make the attack. The fleet is already at the harbour entrance. For God's sake, sir, send at once an advance guard to capture the shore battery. A thousand men will do it. Oh, I fear it is already too late ! ”

But Prevost's eager haste had disappeared. He had his plans and they would be carried out.

“ But, sir, Captain Downie with his long-range guns will be no match for the enemy, who with his short-range carronades will sweep his decks. He is ready set, all in place with landward springs and ground tackle for winding ship.”

“ You are presumptuous, sir,” said the Governor.

“ Forgive me, your Excellency, but Captain Downie is moving to his doom and we sit here, and he carries in his pocket your orders and your promise to co-operate with him.”

“ Silence, sir ! ”

A dull sound fell upon their ears. At once the officers were on their feet.

“ It is his signal gun ! Oh, haste ! I beg you, sir,” cried Rory in a broken voice. “ Shall I order the advance ? ”

“ What folly ! There is an entrenched army awaiting us.”

“ Militia and Izzard's culls, some thirty-five hundred in all. We have more than twice the number ready to march, the best in the world. Give me a thousand men and let me go. Will you not, sir ? ”

“ No ! ” thundered Prevost.

“ Gentlemen ! ” cried Rory to the group of officers standing about with set faces and angry eyes. “ Can nothing be done ? ”

Angry murmurs rose on every side.

“ Captain Murchison, arrest that man.”

“ Sir,” replied Murchison gravely, “ I believe he is pointing the way of duty. I agree with him. Let us march, in God's name.”

"Are you not coming, sir?" Rory implored, angry tears running down his face.

"No!"

"Then, by God, I will go to warn him of this treachery."

"Arrest that man!" shouted the Governor.

No man moved.

Without salute or further word, Rory rushed from the room, flung himself on the first horse he could find and was gone. The officers, without waiting permission, their faces white with fury, left the council room forthwith. Now they could hear the booming of guns. The battle was on.

Three hours and a half later, Downie's flag fluttered down from his masthead, himself sorely wounded, his ship shot to pieces, its decks littered with dead and dying men. Macdonough's splendid seamen and his brilliant seamanship had won, won a complete victory which was his before a gun was fired.

On the deck of the "Confiance," Jason stood in command watching a gunner train his gun upon an escaping gunboat.

"Don't shoot," he ordered. "Let him go. We have done enough for to-day. I know the captain." It was Hector Fraser.

On the deck upon his face lay a man groaning. Jason went to him, turned him over, easing his position.

"Surgeon, here, quick," he said. "Look at this man. He must not die. I tell you, he must not die."

"We will do our best, sir, but he looks bad."

"See that he gets every attention. Get him to the hospital with all speed." He knelt down and lifted the man's head. "Rory, my boy, this is too bad. Drink this."

"Your luck—Jason. And Prevost's—damnable—treachery."

"Don't try to talk, Rory. We will get you at once to hospital. We will see you through, never fear."

"Madeleine!" whispered Rory.

"I will get her at once."

The battle of Plattsburg, a smashing victory for the navy, secured for the Americans command of Lake Champlain, as Perry's victory at Put-in-Bay had that of Lake Erie. It was the last Canadian fight of the war.

Prevost without firing a shot hurried his splendid army, the greatest ever marshalled upon Canadian soil, with all speed to his encampment at Chambly, followed by the execrations of his officers and the open insults of his soldiers, who left his command in hundreds without orders.

The day after the battle a messenger with every sign of hard travel upon him arrived at the Chambly camp inquiring for Simon Fraser. No man in camp was easier to find and none more difficult to get at. For Simon Fraser it was who was at the civilian end of the commissariat for Prevost's army and, with a staff of clerks, from early morn till late at night Simon was at his desk.

"A messenger for you, sir," said an orderly.

"I cannot see him at present. Tell him to wait."

"He says he is from Plattsburg, sir."

Simon dropped the list in his hand.

"From Plattsburg? Send him in."

The messenger appeared to have reached the last limit of his powers.

"Mr. Simon Fraser?"

"Ay? Let me have it. Give the man a drink."

He took the despatch, tore it open.

"The Lord help her," he groaned. "Angus!" A young man came in. "You will bring Mrs. Colonel Fenwick to me at once. Let nothing stay her." A few minutes he sat in concentrated thought. "Ay, that will be the best," he said.

"McPherson!" he called. A middle-aged man appeared. "Take careful notice of these things. They are important. I am sending Miss Josette McNab to Plattsburg with the utmost possible speed. A relay of canoes to La Colle and, if the wind is favourable, Mr. Hector's

yacht, if not the swiftest possible bateau. At La Colle find Mr. Hector. He will take command. At Plattsburg, he is to find either General Van Rensselaer or Captain Jason Appleby or the next in command. The necessary passes will be prepared immediately. Let nothing take precedence of these orders. And send your swiftest runner to make preparations in advance. Send Aleck to me."

"Aleck, take this messenger, give him food and drink."

Without hat or coat, Mrs. Fenwick came running. "My dear Mr. Fraser——"

He held up his hand. "Thank you, Mrs. Fenwick. This letter came from Mrs. Rory Fraser. Her husband is desperately wounded. She asks for Miss Josette McNab. She must be on her way to Plattsburg at the earliest moment. I know you for a sensible woman."

Within half an hour Simon Fraser and Mrs. Fenwick were at the landing bidding adieu and bon voyage to Josette, who sat in a canoe headed for Plattsburg. Aristide Granier was at the stern paddle.

"Aristide. Listen. You will be relieved at the end of ten miles. I have chosen you because Hector says you are the best man on the river. This demands your best speed. Pass the word on."

Aristide threw up his paddle in salute, stripped off his jacket. Three quick powerful strokes and the men settled down to the quick, light, tireless, racing stroke of the voyageur, the whole body behind the stroke.

"My love, my dear love to Rory," cried Simon in a breaking voice. "I would come if I could."

"I will tell him. He will understand. And the Malbaie letters?"

"I will send them within the hour. And say to her, we shall be thinking of her," said Simon, and stood following with dim eyes the speeding craft leaping with every lift of the 'swaying bodies.

"Simon, you are a man after my own heart," said Mrs. Fenwick, putting her hand within his arm.

"He is a son to me and dear as my life!" said Simon, dashing his hand across his eyes.

Three relays of canoe-men and Hector at La Colle took Josette to his yacht. There was a gale blowing down the lake.

"It will be rough, Josette," said Hector, after greeting her.

"Rough? Oh, let us hurry!"

In less than two hours the yacht was at the Plattsburg dock with twenty-five miles of wild water behind her. They found General Van Rensselaer himself waiting.

"Miss Josette McNab, sir," said Hector.

The General bowed as if she had been of the blood royal.

"Rory?" said Josette.

"Doing well!"

"Good-bye, Hector. I will tell Madeleine and Rory too how good you have been."

"Give my love to them both," said Hector.

"You will come to them, perhaps. You will come? He will want you. Perhaps," she said timidly, "General Van Rensselaer can arrange."

"Certainly, Miss Josette," said the General.

"To-morrow, perhaps. La Colle will find me, sir."

"I will send the necessary pass, sir. Good-bye," said the General.

There was a warm welcome waiting Josette from Madeleine.

"So good of you to come, dear. I felt somehow terribly alone. Already I feel so much better and stronger."

Josette delivered Simon's messages.

"What a splendid man he is!" said Madeleine. "And he loves Rory."

"And Hector, too, was so kind, so splendid. He brought me to the dock here himself. He sent his love to you and to the others. He may be here to-morrow."

"That would be good," said Madeleine.

The day following found Madeleine rested, bright, brave and in command of her soul, ministering to her three patients, Max, Alain and Rory, who had been brought to a private hospital provided by General Van Rensselaer and equipped with every device and comfort necessary to the well-being of the patients.

"What news to-day?" inquired General Van Rensselaer, who was making his daily visit to the hospital.

"Better news, uncle. Josette has done us all good. Alain and Max were greatly cheered by her coming."

"And Rory?"

A shadow fell upon the bright face.

"The doctor is anxious, I can see. He is so restless. We cannot get him to sleep except by opiates, and the doctor says he is afraid to give him any more. This is the fourth day. Oh, it is so sad to see him."

Hour after hour Rory lay tossing in delirium. A word from Madeleine would recall him, and for a few minutes he would speak sanely, only to wander off again into incoherent babbling. A deepening shadow rested upon the hospital as the days went on.

A visit from Hector helped them all. He came to the door of Rory's room. Madeleine rose with a little cry.

"Hector! You are come. I am so glad!"

His eyes searched her face. He asked no question, but sat down beside her with his eyes on Rory's face. She wondered at the change in him. The hardness, the cynical, selfish petulance were gone. Strength, nobility, kindness had taken their place. As he gazed upon the worn, pale face and listened to the incoherent and meaningless stream of words, his face began to work strangely. The silent tears gathered and flowed unheeded down his cheeks.

"Oh, Rory, Rory," he murmured. "Is it come to this? Poor old boy." He turned to Madeleine. "Forgive me, Madeleine," he said. "I should not be so weak."

"I love you for it, Hector," she said. "You know he

came to love you and admire you so these last months. And he was so proud of you."

"Anything in me worth while I owe to him. Oh, Rory boy," he said, taking the thin hand and putting it to his lips. "It was you, it was you that brought me back. It was you that made me come."

Rory's eyes turned towards him.

"Hector!" he said. "It is Hector! My dear old boy! What a fight! And you—in your—little—gunboat—popping away—like a—good fellow!"

"Oh, why did you come back, Rory?"

"I thought—I might—hold Downie—back—but—I was—too late—too late——"

"Yes, too late for Downie—too soon for yourself."

"Too late! Prevost! Too late!" He was off again babbling.

"Hector came to see you from Chambly, Rory," said Madeleine, trying to recall him.

"From Chambly? Hector," his voice grew anxious, "you must escape. They will—shoot you— You must—hurry— Go—go!"

"All right, Rory. I have a pass. No danger. Ah, lad, if you would only take care of yourself. But not you. Always in the place of danger. Always the same—at Chateauguay, at Plattsburg—at Burlington—never a thought of yourself!" Hector's tears were flowing again. "I am ashamed of myself, Madeleine," he said, "but to see this man, the finest, best, strongest on the Fleuve, breaks me up. And you are so brave."

"I must be, Hector! He needs me."

"My God, yes! That's the word." He dashed away his tears. Then after a moment's pause he said quietly, "Tell me what I can do, Madeleine, to help."

"You might see Alain. He is worse again. His heart is breaking for Rory."

"I will see him." He rose from his chair. "Let me know if I can help."

"It helps just to see you, Hector—so—so——"

"So different! Yes, thank God, I hope I am. I was a selfish brute——"

"So splendid, Hector."

"I owe it all to him," said Hector. "Where is Alain?"

"I will take you to him."

Alain welcomed Hector with a glad cry that broke into a sob as he clutched his hand.

"Hector, you have come! He is worse! Ah, mon Dieu! He is dying!" The boy tried to rise from his bed.

"Alain," said Hector quietly, "you and I are the only men he has here. We must be steady. He needs us."

"I can't," sobbed the boy. "You don't understand! All my life it has been Rory. I never had father, mother, only Rory—never had a girl—only Rory. Ah, mon Dieu, c'est impossible. No, I must speak English. He always said that."

"Alain. You are a man! A brave man! On the 'Confiance' none was braver! None fought a better fight—so everybody says."

"You, Hector!" cried the boy. "In your gunboat, you——"

"Listen, Alain. Rory needs you, and Madeleine needs you. We must not be selfish, we must think of them."

"Yes," whispered the boy. "Selfish? No, no. He was never selfish! Always his duty. No!" his voice rang out strong. "I will be strong! Madeleine, forgive me. I will not be selfish."

"Dear Alain!"

"But, Madeleine, I would like to see him before—again."

"Of course you will see him," said Hector. "Now good night."

Alain caught his hand, checked himself as he stooped to kiss it, shook hands like a man instead, and with a man's voice said:

"Good-bye, Hector. Come again."

"Surely I will," said Hector. "Good-bye, Madeleine. I shall see you to-morrow. I am not going away. The orderly will know where to get me."

"Thank God for you, Hector." She shyly put her arms round his neck, kissed him and returned to her weary watch.

Later Josette came to her.

"Alain is quite quiet now. He says he is going to sleep. And he will. So now you will let me take your place for an hour or two, Madeleine."

"Oh, no, I can sleep here!"

"No, Madeleine. Hector said you were to let me take your place. Go to your room. I will call you in a little while. You must keep strong for us all. We all depend on you. There is a hot bath ready for you."

"Oh, thank you, dear Josette. You are so thoughtful. Yes, I must be strong. I will go and sleep."

A few hours of sleep, a bath, and breakfast and Madeleine came into Rory's room, bright, fresh and smiling.

"Now, Josette, you will go and do what I have done. No, not a word! It is an order. Your bath is waiting. Sleep, food, and you will be strong for us all. I feel so strong."

She had need of her strength that day. It was afternoon when the doctor came on his rounds.

"How has he been to-day?"

"He seems quieter, doctor," she said. "No, no sleep, but quieter."

The doctor examined him carefully, his face very grave. He signalled a nurse to come in.

"Dear lady," he said, "come with me."

He took her out into the garden, where late flowers still lingered and where the maples were arrayed in their brilliant robes of death.

"What is it, doctor?" she said with white lips. Too well she knew. "How long?" she said, her blue eyes wide open with fear of what she knew was coming.

"You have been wonderful, Mrs. Fraser. He will need you a few hours longer."

"Hours?" she echoed, swaying a little as she held fast to the tree.

"Perhaps a day! Can you——"

Her eyes were closed. Her lips were moving. The doctor bowed his head.

"You will not fail him?" he said.

"No, I will not fail him." Her voice was clear and steady. "God will help me to help him. I must not, I will not fail him. Any orders, doctor?"

"Nothing new. God help you, dear lady." He took her hand, kissed it and was gone.

A few moments she stood looking out through the glorious leafage to the gleaming water of the bay. Then down a path she passed into the woods. When she came back there was upon her face a touch of that light not of sun or moon or stars, but only from the face of God.

With that light upon her face she went in to meet her husband.

He turned his weary eyes to greet her.

"Madeleine!" he said. "How lovely you are, darling! You look happy!"

"Yes, darling. So happy. And you?"

"Oh, so happy. You love me! Nine happy months—wonderful months since I was—sure again—that—you loved me—ever since—that night—when I—kissed you—and you kissed me—I knew then again—Madeleine—you loved me."

"Often I have thanked God you kissed me that night, Rory dear. That night brought back the first happy days."

"Happy days! Ah, yes—happy days—wonderful days—I couldn't believe—you—could—love me——" He lay quite still, and on his face the light of love.

In an adjoining room the others sat together, waiting. Hector, Alain, Josette and Max, waiting, they dared not

say for what, while the slow hours moved on towards the evening. Dully upon their ears fell the sound of carriage wheels. They cared not to look, when before they were aware a lady stood among them. In a moment all were on their feet and crowding about her. It was Miss Christine.

Their silence stunned her. White as a ghostly visitant, she turned her eyes from one to the other. At length she whispered :

"He is gone?"

"No, not yet," said Alain.

She sank weakly into a chair.

"What in Heaven's name do you mean scaring me like that?" She flung off bonnet and cloak. "Where is he?" she demanded.

"In there?" said Josette, pointing to the room.

"Bring Madeleine!" she ordered.

Josette went swiftly and brought Madeleine back with her.

"Christine," cried the girl, her hands lifted high.

"Tut, tut! No nonsense, child! These people very nearly scared me to death. How is he?"

"Very near the end," said Madeleine, clinging to her.

"Don't believe it. Is it a fatal wound? Hector, you are a man of sense. Is the wound fatal?"

"Not necessarily so."

"Then he won't die. You don't know what stuff that boy is made of. A dozen times the doctor has given him up for dead, but he just 'fooled them all. Haven't I brought that boy up! Don't tell me! Don't dare tell me! Take me to him."

"Let me go first and prepare him——"

"Nonsense! I'm not so beautiful as some, but I've never shocked anyone to death by my looks."

Into the room she passed with Madeleine, the others lingering at the door in amazed uncertainty as to what might happen. Critically Miss Christine examined his face, touched his pulse.

"When has he eaten last?" was her first question like a shot from a gun.

"Not since morning. He couldn't eat," said Madeleine.

"Heugh! Have you any beef-tea, strong beef-tea? No! What then? Slops, I suppose. Any milk? Bring me some. Any rum, brandy, Scotch? Good stuff, I mean? Bring me some." Everyone was moving to obey her orders.

With a glass of milk and brandy she stood over the sick man.

"Well, Rory!" she said in a clear firm voice.

He opened his eyes, and quite unamazed smiled at her.

"Feeling better, eh? Take this." She gave him a teaspoonful of the mixture. "Another? Of course." He took a second. "One more?" He took a third. "Oh, that will do. You were always ready to make a pig of yourself. Your mother sends her love to you, Rory!" she said, in a matter-of-fact voice as if announcing a change in the weather.

"Mother?" whispered Rory.

"Yes. She is much better. I left her about thirty-six hours ago." She did not say that she had travelled continuously night and day those thirty-six hours, by yacht, bateau and canoe. "She told me she was expecting you home soon."

Rory shook his head feebly. "I'm done—Christine—going——"

"Done? Don't talk nonsense. Your mother wants to see you. You are not going to disappoint her. That would be a beastly trick." Again he shook his head. "Don't shake your head at me. You always were a stubborn little devil. Your mother wants you home, and home you are going to go. And besides, look at this girl here. Do you know her?"

"Madeleine!" whispered Rory, a wonderful, pitiful smile illuminating his haggard face.

The smile almost did for Miss Christine. There was a

quick, choking breath, but as quickly she was herself again.

"Well, this girl needs you. She married you. Came all the way to Chambly to do it. You can't desert her now. Listen to me." His eyes, so big, so blue, so hungry, were fixed upon her face with a strange intensity. "You are going to get well, and no nonsense about it. What's wrong with you?"

"He can't sleep, Christine. He hasn't slept for days," said Madeleine.

"Time he did then. Here, drink some more of this."

Rory grinned at her. "You—would be—a great—sergeant-major—Miss Christine," he whispered.

"You take your drink!"

He did. A half-dozen teaspoonfuls, to his own and the company's amazement.

"Sit down, you people. Don't stand there gawking." Like children detected in mischief they took seats about the room. "What you want, young man, is someone to make you mind. And a good whiff of Malbaie air. My stars, you ought to see Cap l'Aigle. One glorious mass of colour. Never mind. We'll have you there before long." With her keen eyes upon his face she talked of Malbaie and its people and their doings.

Rory began to wander. But his mind was off in new tracks.

"Steady! Ma chère," he muttered. "No, no—not yet—ah then—wait just a little——" His voice trailed off into silence.

"He is driving Vitesse," whispered Alain.

Then he began humming an old French-Canadian chanson.

"What is he singing, Josette?" whispered Miss Christine. "I can't remember."

"Gai lon la, gai le rosier," said Josette.

"Yes, that's it. Sing it, Josette," ordered Miss Christine. "You too, Alain."

With a great effort Josette began and Alain followed.

Softly and in beautiful harmony they sang the jolly old chanson, Rory keeping time with his hand :

“ Par derrier’ chez ma tante
Lui ya-t-un bois joli ;
Le rosignol y chante
Et le jour et la nuit.
Gai lon la, gai le rosier
Du joli mois de mai.”

“ Keep on, keep on. Don’t stop, for God’s sake,” urged Miss Christine, her voice hoarse, almost breaking. On and on through the interminable story the song moved.

“ Oh, don’t stop,” begged Christine in a voice that shook for all her brusqueness, and gallantly the two went on with one song after another.

“ Now ‘ A la Claire Fontain,’ ” whispered Miss Christine.

As they sang that loveliest of French-Canadian chansons, Rory’s eyes actually began to droop. Madeleine fell on her knees, her head beside Rory’s on the pillow, holding his hand in hers and gently patting his shoulder.

Before the song was finished Rory was sleeping, his breast rising and falling lightly as a baby’s. For an hour more the singing went on, Hector relieving Alain now and then.

“ God bless me, look at that ! ” whispered Christine.

Side by side on the same pillow the two heads, the red and the gold, lay, while both slept the sleep of exhausted vitality.

Next morning as the pearly grey of the new day was stealing up over the maples on the eastern horizon, the doctor came tiptoeing into the room and stood in utter amazement at the scene before his eyes. Miss Christine was holding a cup of beef-tea to Rory’s lips.

“ A little more, Rory. Come ! No nonsense ! ” And Rory like a child obeying, drank and once more, turning his head wearily on his pillow, slept.

The doctor came and laid his finger on the pulse, listened to the heart-beat and stood back in silent wonder.

"That boy is better!" he said slowly. "What in Heaven's name have you been doing to him? Who are you, anyway?"

"Hush!" commanded Miss Christine, beckoning him into the next room.

The doctor without a word followed, Madeleine behind him, her face radiant as the morning. Miss Christine shut the door softly behind them and faced the doctor.

"What have you done to him? That boy is going to live," he said in dazed wonder.

"Of course he's going to live. Do you think I would travel more than two hundred miles to see him die?"

As Miss Christine was speaking Madeleine sank on her knees beside her, caught her hand, and pressing passionate kisses upon it sobbed out: "Thank God you came to him. He will live! Oh, my darling, he will live!" Miss Christine dropped on her knees beside her and gathered her into her arms.

"There, there, child, cry all you like," she said, her own tears falling fast. "Run away, I am busy, and come later."

In meek obedience the doctor tiptoed from the room.

"God in heaven! What a woman!" he said to himself. "I verily believe that boy will live."

In the adjoining room a strange scene was being enacted. The three men, Alain, Max and Hector, were circling round in silent Indian war dance, hopping from one foot to the other and going through soundless motions of the Indian war-song: "Kai-yai! Kai-yai! Hai! Hai! Hai!"

"Ye daft loons! Let be! Have ye gone mad?"

"We have, Miss Christine! We have! And can you blame us? He's going to live! He's going to live," cried Alain in a stage whisper. Again the door opened and Madeleine appeared. A single moment she stood in amazed wonder.

"Christine!" she cried. "He is asking for you? What do you think, Christine?"

"Why not? If these daft loons will only behave themselves and do as they are bid."

Solemnly the men promised and filed into the room.

"Here they are," announced Miss Christine. "Look at them. A daft pack. And," shaking a finger at Madeleine, "she's the daftest of the lot. Now say good morning and off with ye."

The big, blue eyes staring out above the white cheeks rested for a moment upon each face. Then two great tears stole silently down the hollows of his cheeks.

"I couldn't—bear—to leave—you," he whispered with a smile. "So—I think—I am coming—back."

"Out with you!" said Miss Christine in a fierce whisper, her own eyes running over, and marshalled them from the room, leaving the two alone.

For a few moments Rory lay as if asleep, then opening his eyes he feebly moved his hand. Swiftly she came and kneeled beside him.

"Happy?" he whispered.

She laid her face beside his. A little sigh breathed from her lips.

"Rory, you have come back. You are here."

THE END

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